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THE HAPPIER EVENT AT ALGIERS

WHAT has happened during the past two weeks in Algiers may do much to shape history in the months and years that lie before us. The period of eclipse in the life of the French people is over and a united France capable of action has come into being. That means something appreciable in the military reckoning, for there is a French army of 300,000 men in North Africa, while the remnant of what was once a great navy will soon be available for action, and in the occupied homeland a spirited movement of civilian resistance awaits with impatience the call to strike. The distant perspective is veiled as yet from our conjectures. Nothing is certain, save that the Fourth Republic cannot be the helpless and paralysed nation which fell too easily to Hitler's mechanised legions and its own Fifth Column. During three years of suffering and humiliation new forces have been generated; new leaders have emerged and it may be that new ideas have come to life as vital as any which French genius evolved in the past. France has still a great part to play in the common life of Europe. What began when the two generals met may have a sequel that will modify all our plans for the Continent.

What, then, has happened and how far has unity been achieved? The process is not yet completed and we do not suppose that all the causes of friction and dissension have been removed. But before we glance at these, it is proper to emphasise what has been achieved. In the first place the two generals whose rivalry was for so many months an obstacle to unity have met and accepted a provisional formula under which they can act together. We must suppose that the common sense and the general will of French patriots have asserted themselves in an irresistible impulse towards unity which proved to be stronger than the spirit of faction. In the second place a National Committee, in effect a Cabinet, has been constituted with the full consent of both generals. Henceforth it is the sovereign body which all French Republicans will recognise. Its authority has been put to a severe test in the first days of its existence. It has managed to get rid of the two men whose reactionary record made the worst blot on the North African régime. M. Peyrouton for some obscure reason enjoyed the confidence of Washington and may have been admired as a tough imperial administrator by the wealthy and conservative minority among the French settlers. General Noguès was the typical soldier, with a long tenure of command, who may have been trusted by the officers of a colonial army which had its Fascist tendencies. The elimination of these two men of Vichy, apparently with ease, should enhance the prestige of the new Government. No news of General Boisson's removal has yet come to hand.

It is understood that the National Committee takes its decisions by counting heads. Since that is so, the experts on the spot have scrutinised its composition closely and they tell us that General de Gaulle's nominees outnumber those of General Giraud. We dislike this habit of labelling Frenchmen who have agreed to act together for the salvation of their enslaved Fatherland. But apart from personal considerations, two real forces came together at Algiers and their respective claims had to be measured and reconciled. Behind de Gaulle is the movement of resistance in France, organised underground round political parties, trade unions and groups of guerillas, each with its secret printing press. This active nucleus of the living French nation had rallied behind the soldier who was the first to repudiate the policy of surrender. To his credit stands the act of defiance which brought hope and courage in an hour of depression and shame. He is, we take it, rather a symbol than a leader. On the one side, then, is French democracy, the majority of the day after tomorrow, but at the moment a force which cannot be concentrated or mobilised. General Giraud, on the other hand, is a popular soldier but he has no civilian movement behind him. The real power at his back is the colonial army, which consists mainly of African troops. It is a well-trained and disciplined force and one which will do its leader's bidding. It is of good omen, then, that this governing Committee reflects the preponderance of the civilian democracy.

These are, to our thinking, the decisive facts which entitle the settlement negotiated by General Catroux to a warm welcome. But we should suppose that the arrangement by which Generals de Gaulle and Giraud preside by turns over the Committee and sign its decisions jointly can only be provisional. Primitive societies often had two kings: one was divine and so sacred that he could seldom move, while the other led his armies. This plan has never commended itself to more advanced States. It is possible that a solution may be reached by delimiting the spheres of political and military authority, of which the latter would fall to General Giraud. Again, the details have still to be worked out of the procedure by which a provisional administration will be set up when the soil of France is liberated. Some propose that this interim Government shall be chosen by the *Conseils Généraux*, which correspond to our county councils. They always tend to be conservative bodies: they were elected long ago and would have to be purged of the partisans of Vichy who sit on them. It might be simpler that the new National Committee should itself act as the Provisional Government which will in due course conduct the elections for a Constituent Assembly. On such an issue as this it is French opinion, when it can speak freely, which must decide. In military matters, during the struggle for the liberation of French soil, the supreme command will inevitably fall to the head of the Anglo-American forces. But the less we interfere in French politics and in the process of self-determination, the happier will be our future relations with the French Republic. It may be that the two English-speaking Allies wield overwhelming military and economic power. France for the moment is weak, but more than once in the past she has proved her capacity for recovery. She has her proper pride, and her splendid civilisation is very much her own. In such cases there is only one safe rule to follow—never to speak or even to think of our superior resources and never to obtrude them. The happy event in Algiers should reduce the scope of Allied control in France to the barest military minimum.

Japanese Retreat

The Japanese forces which made an expedition westwards and south-westwards from Ichang, on the Upper Yangtze, last month in the general direction of Chungking, have withdrawn; and their withdrawal is reported to have been harassed by Chinese troops supported by American air squadrons. In so far as this retreat disposes of any threat to Marshal Chiang Kai-shek's capital, the news is welcome; but having regard to the difficulties of the country between Ichang and Chungking, it seems questionable whether the Japanese objective went beyond making a foray (albeit in considerable strength) for the purpose primarily of destroying rice crops. Indeed, the general policy which the Japanese appear to be pursuing in China at this stage is to rest content with their hold upon vital river and rail communications in the hope that shortage of munitions and, above all, of food will result gradually in the deterioration of morale in Free China, and in the undermining politically of the Marshal's position. So long as Chungking is isolated to the present extent from the other United Nations, it would be idle to ignore the possibility that time may be on Japan's side. Immediate Allied policy should be to aid China by reinforcements of aircraft.

The Argentine Puzzle

Cablegrams from Buenos Ayres are so heavily censored that they give us little help in interpreting the rather mysterious military *pronunciamento* in the Argentine. It has upset Dr. Castillo, on whom had fallen the reversion of a sick President's office. He was at once a reactionary in home affairs and a partisan of the Axis, who was playing tricks with the Constitution—in these latitudes a time-honoured sport. A military *Putsch* under Generals Rawson and Ramirez upset him before he could arrange a general election under some form of martial law. There was, we judge, little ill-feeling between the rival elevens: less than fifty men were killed and the former President, after resigning, with every regard to the rules of the national game, was allowed to sail away to safety. It was then found that sundry disagreements among the victors made it difficult to form a Cabinet and General Rawson resigned. General Ramirez is now in office, and seems to have surprised the country for the time being into acquiescence. Since he was until lately the fallen President's Minister of War, it is clear that he cannot be either a democrat or a decided partisan of the United Nations. His proclamations reaffirm a policy of neutrality with no hint at a change. It may be, however, that his brand of neutrality means rather the traditional Argentine stand-offishness towards "the Colossus of the North" than any warm attachment to the Axis. The best guess about the cause of the revolt traces it to professional military grievances. The soldiers may have been anxious because they could get no arms from the United States. In that case they may be ready to barter away their neutrality for a consideration.

The Labour Situation in the U.S.A.

The American miners' strike was soon over; but the issues which lie behind it are by no means settled yet. Mr. Lewis obeyed the President's direct order to send the men back to work; but there is no evidence that he is any more prepared than he was before to accept the jurisdiction of the War Labour Board or that those coal-owners who have so far stood in the way of a settlement by direct negotiation are any readier to come to terms. The mines have been reopened by Mr. Ickes, acting as Government Fuel Administrator, and work in them is proceeding on a temporary basis; but there is still no assurance that the trouble will not recur. In the meantime the House of Representatives, much against the President's will, is for rushing through a comprehensive anti-strike measure which would punish the entire Labour movement for Mr. Lewis's sins. This Bill has not yet been considered by the Senate, which has been busy on a less drastic measure of its own; but there is a plain danger of panic legislation which would probably have the effect of weakening the hold of both the C.I.O. and the A.F. of L. leaders over their members, and would play straight into Mr. Lewis's hands. As for the coal trouble itself, it does not seem to be denied that the miners ought, in one way or another, to be accorded an advance in earnings, or that there are ways of achieving this without infringing formally the "Little Stick" formula by which the War Labour Board stands. It will, however, now be difficult to give the miners any substantial gains without starting a rush of demands from other trades; and there are big dangers in this, as the civilian sector of the American economy is already suffering from a plethora of purchasing power and a growing shortage of goods to buy with it. Inflation exists already, and its effects are becoming more marked as reserve stocks of goods are exhausted.

Hot Springs

The "Hot Springs" Conference has ended in a series of laudable, but not very effective resolutions. Probably no more was to be expected of it; for the practical task of working up its resolutions into real plans is bound to be a matter for committees, rather than for the Conference itself. The great danger, of course, is that these committees, when they do get to work, will show more enthusiasm for preventing price fluctuations than for ensuring adequate supplies. We have every sympathy with the desire of the food producers all over the world for less unstable markets than they experienced between the wars; but if stability is purchased at the price of restrictions on output the effort will certainly not be that of raising standards of nutrition either in the more backward countries or elsewhere. There is much to be said for buffer stocks and for a regulated trade in wheat and other basic agricultural products; but the buffer stocks must not be held in such a way as to reduce supplies, and a "regulated" trade must not be made the means to a smaller trade than would exist under unregulated conditions. The real guarantee for improvement in agricultural conditions is the maintenance of a high level of employment in the industrial countries, coupled with a policy of economic development in the backward countries designed to reduce the pressure of population on the land. The worst possible way of going about better nutrition will be first to encourage high-cost production in the consuming countries and then, having destroyed their capacity as markets, to bolster up prices in the exporting countries by means of drastic restriction schemes. It can be argued that this was not at all what the delegates at Hot Springs were aiming at; but there is a danger that it may be allowed to happen and that Governments, while letting those who represent them at such gatherings *talk* about better nutrition, will in fact adopt national policies of which the effect will be to push the backward countries back into the slough of despond.

The Postal Workers' Case

Quite a number of our contemporaries are lecturing the Trades Union Congress and the Union of Post Office Workers with a most complacent severity for their declared intention of flouting the terms of the 1927 Trade Union Act. The Trade Unions are told that, though justice and reason may be on their side, nothing can justify them in breaking the law. But in truth neither the T.U.C. nor the U.P.W. have broken or shown any intention of breaking any law. The 1927 Act lays down that Civil Servants may not belong to any Union which includes non-civil servants in its membership, or is affiliated with bodies outside the Civil Service. The Act does not say that the U.P.W may not belong to the T.U.C., but only that, if it does, no Civil Servant may belong to the U.P.W. Accordingly, if and when affiliation goes through, it will be for the Government, if it thinks fit, to take disciplinary action against the employees who refuse thereafter to renounce their connection with the U.P.W. The law-breaking will begin only when such refusals are given; and that cannot be for some months yet, as the question of affiliation will not formally come up, one supposes, until the T.U.C. meets early in September. This gives plenty of time for the Government to use common sense. Everyone knows that the reason why the 1927 Act has not been modified long ago is resistance from the Tory Central Office—backed, perhaps, by Mr. Churchill, who was after all himself largely the author of this unwisely vindictive measure. It is to be hoped that well before September Mr. Attlee and Mr. Bevin will have been able to persuade Mr. Churchill that adherence to anti-Labour legislation of General Strike days is not the best way of keeping the Labour movement contented with his leadership, or of giving his Labour colleagues a reasonable chance of maintaining their own prestige in the Labour movement. Indignation against the T.U.C. and the U.P.W. is very much out of place. The responsibility for the difficulty is primarily Mr. Churchill's, and he must not be allowed to run away from it.

School Meals

According to the White Paper recently issued, four out of every five elementary school-children in England and Wales are getting supplies under the milk-in-schools scheme, and for secondary school-children three out of every five. As against this, the proportions getting school meals are only one in five in the elementary and under one in every two in the secondary schools. It is particularly to be regretted that the proportion of school meals should be still so low in the elementary schools, where the need is greatest of all. It is true that the proportion has risen over the past year from not much over one in ten to one in five; but this is a rate of progress much behind what the public has been led to expect. The President of the Board has now announced a fresh drive to increase the provision of school meals, including the free provision of kitchen equipment to local authorities which are prepared to take advantage of it. The blame for the slow progress so far made clearly rests mainly on the local authorities; but the Government cannot evade its share of the responsibility. The provision of meals at school ought by now to be as universal as the provision of teaching, and it ought to be put outside the power of the local authorities not to extend the scheme to all their schools. Moreover, the forthcoming Education Bill ought to make the provision of both milk and meals a regular and compulsory part of the post-war educational system.

The Premier Returns (*by a Parliamentary Correspondent*)

The Prime Minister secured another oratorical triumph in his latest speech to the House. His best speeches on the war [in the past have been either a narrative of what has happened or a challenge to his own critics and to the enemy. On this occasion Mr. Churchill made a fairly lengthy speech which held absorbed a crowded House and gallery which knew he could tell them nothing they wanted to know of the promised invasion of Europe, but which wanted to pay him their tribute and which was very ready to be titivated.

The Government's pension Bill passed its Committee stage without any substantial amendment. The large labour vote against the government on its second reading should hasten the introduction of long-term post-war proposals; it has immediately led to very frank discussions within the Parliamentary Party about how to increase unity and what relations the Party should have with the Government and more particularly with its members within the government. To avoid feeling that the Administrative Committee is the stooge of the Government and to increase its influence and standing, the Parliamentary Party has decided by a majority that in future less than half of the Administrative Committee can be drawn from members of the Government. Whether this change will have the desired effect remains to be seen.

POPULAR FALLACIES

In America, Britain and no doubt also in the U.S.S.R., plans are now being worked out to meet the situation when the Nazi regime and the German war machine are destroyed. As far as the public knows, the only joint decisions of the United Nations are contained in declarations that the war will be continued until the defeat of "Hitlerite Germany" and the "unconditional surrender" of the Axis Powers, and in the general provisions and promises of the Atlantic Charter. There is agreement among all the Allied Powers that unity between them is to be maintained for the peace-making and after it, that Germany is to be "occupied" by the victorious armies and that war criminals are to be punished. We have also Mr. Churchill's assurance that the Atlantic Charter implies the total disarmament of Germany, but (if only for reasons of self-interest) that it is not this time intended to compass her economic destruction. Freedom from want and fear are intended for all; they will exist for none, if not generally diffused. Measures of relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation are promised for the whole area devastated by war. Security is to be maintained by some form of world organisation at first necessarily controlled by the Great Powers. Mr. Churchill further envisages European and Asiatic Councils. This is a rough framework into which common people fit their aspirations and officials their more detailed blue prints.

Neither the aspirations nor the blue prints are likely to be valuable unless we first clear away some of the fallacies to which ignorance, passion and prejudice naturally give birth at such a time as this. Wishful thinking is only too easy. We are all "idealists" of some sort; some compensate for their misery about war by dreams of a golden future and a speedy reconciliation with their enemies, while others employ the reverse psychological process which enables them to find satisfaction in the thought of a holy destruction of the wicked and a righteous vengeance on the hosts of Satan. The only safeguard is to consider, as far as possible in the mood of the scientist, the appalling mess that confronts us, and to ask how the administrative, political and economic problems that will actually face the victorious nations can best be met for the general well-being. As soon, for instance, as we move from the realm of wishful dreaming to a practical consideration of any of the problems that must be solved by an occupying army in Germany, we see that popular thinking, and much official thinking too, is now frequently concerned with sheer irrelevancies. Let us begin by listing a few popular fallacies:

1. *That when Germany is beaten there will be a breathing space in which we stop, mop our brows, hold everything in Europe and decide what rewards and punishments to administer.*

This fallacy was in some degree encouraged by Mr. Churchill's speech in which he referred to the interval in which we could settle Europe while the Japanese war continued.

A comparison with 1918–19 quickly dispels this fallacy. Europe was not shaped by the men of Versailles; they failed to do things which were within their power to give Europe social and economic unity, but their political decisions for the most part only confirmed actions already taken by the peoples themselves. At the end of this war the chaos will be far greater. Rival groups will seize territory and attempt to settle old grievances amongst the victorious nations as well as against the defeated nations. Various social revolutions will be in progress; large bodies of foreign workers will be striving to reach their own homes. There will be widespread hunger and probably disease. The settlement will be made mainly as a result of these conflicts in which the Allied armies can only play a very secondary part. The sphere in which their influence can be decisive is in relief and reconstruction, and the building of international economic institutions.

(2) *That there are two possible types of "peace"—a "soft" peace, which would again enable the German militarists to plunge the world into war, and a "tough" peace, by which Germany can be permanently held down.*

It is not like that at all. At the end of the war in Europe many Germans will certainly be killed in occupied countries: the Germans will fear especially the vengeance of the peoples of Eastern Europe, while the "severe" peace recently suggested by Sir John Wardlaw-Milne and a group of Conservative M.P.s might seem to many, especially German industrialists who fear Bolshevism, the best fate that could await them. Their international business friends would in time want their co-operation. On the other hand, a "Left" peace, which some assume to be the same as a "soft" peace, would be the most severe to the industrialists and would aim at releasing in Germany anti-Nazi working-class elements feared by many who claim to be "Vansittartites." In 1919 Germany was very effectively disarmed, and until 1936 she remained helpless against the arms of Britain and France. Germany was permitted to arm and aided in the process by the very people who talked most about a tough peace during the last war. The same people would again want German industry to be strong as a defence against Bolshevism before long. On the other hand, in 1919, sailors and workers who revolted against the Kaiser's tottering regime were suppressed, while the Allied armies watched and approved. The whole conception of the soft and the tough peace towards Germany is erroneous; the question is how we are to destroy the militarist elements of Germany and fit the German economy into a system which will not produce poverty, discontent, dictatorship and war.

3. *That there will be a rising of anti-Nazi Germans capable of taking over the administration of the country as soon as the war ends.*

This fallacy is the result of under-estimating the power of propaganda and terror, and the degree to which all past political institutions and free associations have been pulverised, and the success with which anti-Nazi leaders have been sought out and murdered by the S.S. in the course of ten years of Hitlerism. Nationalism has again in this war proved the most pervasive and powerful force.

4. *That there is no "other Germany" to which we can give the chance in the future of becoming the dominant Germany.*

Lack of anti-Nazi activity in Germany during the war does not mean that Germany is united under Hitler. A highly nationalist people, who have been offered no alternative but the extreme humiliation and misery of national defeat, will not desire the victory of the enemy even if they detest their government. Nor have those who belong to the revolutionary underground movement any opportunity of organising resistance while German armies succeed. The evidence of the "other Germany" does, however, exist. We know that very many of the older generation remain, as Henry Wallace has again reminded us, believers in a tradition which Hitler could not wipe out. "Many," as the Vice-President of the United States put it, "are steeped in the German liberal tradition and the ideals of Scandinavian co-operation." Books that quote extracts from the dominant imperialist philosophy of Germany omit the German replies to these worshippers of the State. The liberal tradition exists in Germany, but it has never been on the top. That is the great difference between us and Germany. It should be possible to parallel the extravagance of German imperialism with passages from British imperialism. But in England the liberal philosophy has modified the practice of imperialism. It is our job to provide conditions in which this other submerged Germany now gets its chance.

We shall find a particularly valuable tradition amongst German workers. That we know little of working-class opposition to Hitler during the war is no proof that it does not exist. Contacts with German capitalism have been frequent through neutral countries during the war, but we have had little or no access to factory opinion. All that is known is that there is much discontent and some ca'canny, particularly in the Rhineland. We may expect that when the constant supervision of the S.S. is removed and reports gather of the defeat of the German army, workers in the factories will assert themselves as they did after the last war.

We know also that the Church, though long nationalist in sentiment, is anti-Nazi. Some of its leading spokesmen, such as the Bishop of Berlin and the Bishop of Munster, have bravely championed Christian opposition to the Nazi faith. The recent revolt of the students at Munich, which appears to have spread to students in other universities—the latest evidence is the demand by the acting student Führer of Königsberg for a purge of the unsuitable elements in the high schools—seems to be based on an ethical detestation of Hitlerism and involves a European outlook which asks for an international system.

5. *That we need not worry about what kind of Germany emerges, because the United Nations intend to occupy and run Germany for a long time.*

This fallacy is most effectively exploded by a realistic consideration of the problems of occupying and administrating a highly developed country like Germany. A temporary military occupation is one thing, a protracted administration is another. Americans and Englishmen now training to be civil administrators in Germany must be well aware that their task will only be possible if they have the collaboration of a large part of the occupied population. Even if the Allied Nations agreed amongst themselves during the occupation they would have neither the will nor the vast personnel which would be necessary to administer Germany without the aid of Germans. To take the first example, the administration of relief and the immediately necessary rebuilding might be directed for a time by Allied Gauleiters, but it must be carried out by Germans. Those who are entrusted with such tasks in any locality will be defended by Allied bayonets and acquire a measure of authority. Therefore, from the first day of occupation we cannot help supporting one group of Germans against another. Shall we again protect the Junkers, the military caste and the industrialists or give a fair field to the revolutionaries?

In another article we hope to examine further fallacies about occupation.

HOW NOT TO START

(The author of this article is an Englishman resident in India from 1929 to 1937)

There are two excellent photographs of the two latest Viceroys of India. One of them shows Lord Willingdon, perhaps unaware of the camera, squatting on the steps of a Lahore hospital, smiling broadly, and writing his autograph for Indian urchins who throng round him, peer over his shoulder, jostle him. The other is of the Most Hon. the Marquess of Linlithgow, posed on horseback in front of a viceregal wall: top-hatted, frock-coated: Victorian propriety in every rigid line of man and mount.

We could hardly expect a permanent chain of Viceroys equal to the 1921–36 series. But with the guidance of recent examples, we can expect the next one or two to avoid queering their own pitch at the start. With ten years' previous service in India, plus a few weeks for looking round after his return, Willingdon said in his first public speech as Viceroy that he wanted to be India's first constitutional Governor-General before his time was up. In his first hour of office, with much less experience of India, Linlithgow broadcast a homily to the whole country in the manner of a benevolent pastor-master: telling it, in effect, how he hoped to be loved, but also how he expected it to behave.

Part of this Address was preserved:—

> To the Army in India and the Royal Air Force I speak as one who has shared their life both in peace and in war, and whose happiest days have

been spent with the Colours. I recall with pride and pleasure that in Northern France in 1915, I witnessed the loyalty, discipline and valour of the units of the Indian Army. Of the decorations that His Majesty has been graciously pleased to confer upon me, there is none I prize more highly than the Long Service Medal of that branch of the Army in which I had the honour to serve.

And analogously to the Indian Navy and Police. He then directed that these extracts be framed and posted in appropriate spots all over India, and that on a day near the middle of May, one of the hottest months in the plains, troops and police be paraded specially to hear the messages read once again by their officers.

He had been in office just about a week when he peremptorily sacked a whole battalion from guard-duty at the Viceroy's House because he saw what he *thought* were three or four sepoys, whom he *thought* to be on sentry-go, smoking or playing cards in the small hours.

A fortnight later, this letter went out from the Bureau of Public Information to one of India's newspapers :—

> I understand from the Viceroy's Private Secretary that His Excellency has been surprised to see the way in which the —— publishes the Court Circular [he meant the Viceroy's, not the King's]. It is printed up in one box, under the heading "Social and Personal," with items of information about the movements of private individuals. His Excellency's view, I am informed, is that a newspaper such as the —— might reproduce the Court Circular in approximately the same way as does the London *Times*. There, as you know, it is treated somewhat differently from ordinary "Social and Personal" items. There would, of course be no objection to announcements from provincial Government Houses being published with the Court Circular, but his Excellency feels that the inclusion with it of items such as I have outlined in red, in the enclosed cutting, is undesirable.

In the paper concerned, the Circular was already being printed daily at the top of a column on the second-best page of news. The items "outlined in red" related to such "private individuals" as a senior member of the Government of India and an eminent Indian statesman. Their treatment differed from the habits of the London *Times* by the thinness of the line or "rule" obviously distinguishing them from the Viceroy's Court Circular.

Very admirably Lord Linlithgow presented three stud bulls for the free use of poor breeders in Delhi, and urged private enterprise to follow suit. But he need not have claimed, or allowed the claim to be made, that this was an original idea; the Punjab Government, for instance, had given over 4,500 free stud bulls in the eight preceding years. Official statements described a project "inaugurated by His Excellency the Viceroy" for the supply of free milk daily to schoolchildren—after he had seen how well it was being done by local authority in Simla before he became Viceroy.

Personal incomes in India were variously estimated, at the time, to average between £5 and £9 a year per head of the Indian population. The Viceroy's salary was about £20,000 a year, plus a sumptuary allowance of £3,000. He also gets a grant, roughly equivalent to four times his salary, for his staff, his comings and goings, and perhaps a few other extras. Here are two items of expenditure in Willingdon's penultimate year and Linlithgow's second year :—

	1934–35	1937–38
Private Secretary's Establishment	£14,516	£26,023
The Viceroy's Tours	£29,156	£39,000

Some taxpayers wondered why ninety-nine people had to go with Lord Linlithgow on his "private visit" to an Indian Prince for ten days in October, 1936, and 124 when he went to another State a month later, for not so long.

In his original broadcast homily, he had said :

> In my judgment the appropriate forum for the exposition and, where necessary, the defence of Government policy is upon the floor of the legislatures.

In the first session of the Central Legislative Assembly after he took office, Linlithgow beat all previous records in his use of the power to quash debates. He vetoed more than a dozen adjournment motions—not always because they referred to provincial rather than central jurisdiction, and were therefore *ultra vires*—and he banned the introduction of a Bill to make reports of the Assembly's proceedings privileged.

At the height of the constitutional crisis in the spring of 1937—when the Congress was haggling over the terms on which it would accept office for a spell—Linlithgow left New Delhi "to spend a few days shooting in the Bareilly district before proceeding to Dehra Dun and Simla." But he may have been prudently waiting on the certainty that time and their own internal forces would bring the Congressmen into line, as in fact they did. So after twelve weeks he spoke. He must use, he said, the "language of precision." Here is an example of it, addressed to people whose mother tongue, anyhow, is not English :—

> The design of Parliament and the object of those of us who are servants of the Crown in India and to whom it falls to work the provisions of the Act, must be and is to ensure the utmost degree practicable of harmonious co-operation with the elected representatives of the people for the betterment and improvement of each individual province and of India as a whole, and to avoid in every way consistent with the special responsibilities for minorities and the like which the Act imposes, any such clash of opinion as would be calculated unnecessarily to break down the machine of government, or to result in a severance of that fruitful partnership between the Governor and his Ministers which is the basis of the Act, and the ideal the achievement of which the Secretary of State, the Governor-General and the provincial Governors are all equally concerned to secure.

Lord Linlithgow has been Viceroy longer than anyone before him. None of his possible successors can very well work harder than he has worked, or more devotedly, or with better intentions. But if they have deigned to read this appreciation of the way he started, they may understand one of the many causes of India's perplexity as his term draws to an end. Let's say to the winning candidate—if there *are* volunteers for such an awful job—"Go, and don't do likewise."

O. S. EDWARDES

POST OFFICE WORKERS AND THE TRADE DISPUTES ACT

[This account of one of the most important issues that will engage the attention of the annual meeting of the Labour Party next week comes from the General Secretary of the Union of Post Office Workers.]

IN a social order founded on liberty there will always be two principle aspects of that liberty. The first is the liberty of the individual; the second is the liberty of individuals, in association, to act in association on the mandate of a majority vote. There is, I submit, no complete political liberty unless it be twofold in this manner. The Trade Disputes and Trades Unions Act was designed legally to set up a body of servants whose liberty should be restricted to private and intimate things only, and for whom liberty to act in association should be proscribed into non-existence.

The desire to create its own "valet" class will be strongest when a Government is not too proud of its stewardship. Fascist and Nazi regimes have realistically accepted this as policy and openly created their own "valet" force, coloured shirts and all.

The Government of 1927 was not overproud of its treatment of the miners, nor of its attitude to organised Labour, and it was that Government who legalised the facile stuff about civil servants having no politics. Surely it is the term "Civil Servant" which needs definition. A democratic mind applied to a definition would see that to take all those who did public work and treat them alike was sheer bad statesmanship. Governments who sanctify themselves in the name of "The State" and then draw around themselves a multitude of "State Servants" should sit at Berchtesgaden rather than at Westminster.

Democracy is a living power that faces moral issues from day to day. It does not consider itself as having settled those issues by electing someone for five years. Post Office people claim, therefore, that when moral issues are before them they should have no disability in judgment. They believed the miners were right; they believed the Government was wrong. They said so. They subscribed heavily and generously to help the miners and the T.U.C. No academic unrealities should stand in the way of a moral judgment.

All this to show, vaguely I fear, how the soundness of heart of Post Office people got into conflict with political acceptances. From that conflict came repression. It called itself an Act of Parliament, but it was Fascist in conception and in execution. Civil Servants were parchmented into a new status. They were crippled in their Associations. No matter how definitely they might decide in conference and meeting that they, as a body, were of the working class and part of its organised power, they were forbidden to express that decision.

In the first place the International. The Union of Post Office Workers was affiliated to the International P.T.T. Its General Secretary was President of the International. The Trade Union Act ordered Post Office Trade Unionists to come away. So, like the Nazis and the Fascists, they left their places and walked out.

Then the T.U.C. Our General Secretary at that time was on the General Council. The Post Office Workers were ordered to come away. Your readers must imagine how that affected us *then*. They know how ridiculous it looks *to-day*. And the Labour Party. There's the rub, of course! We decided democratically in conference assembled to be affiliated to the Labour Party. The Government of 1927 decided that membership of a Society so affiliated could not be sought by an individual public servant.

There are those who argue that the highly placed Civil Servant should have no political affiliations or loyalties, and should only be free in the personal and intimate sense I have described. He is appointed, they argue, to do the work of the Minister elected by the people, and his loyalty to the job should be without qualification. He loses the second liberty as the price of his job. This has been so often argued! But Post Office people ask, naturally, who is the highly placed? A Democracy should set that definition high indeed, since definition will be limitation. It surely does not affect members of the Union of Post Office Workers, who, as servants of the people, have their duties clearly defined, and with whom loyalty on the one hand and obedience on the other remain the safeguards. The Trade Union Act cannot assume we are all highly placed Civil Servants for one purpose and commodities in the market for another. For years we have bitterly resented this misuse of political power. Our resentment has been the keener for the fact that in wages and conditions we are always judged by the common standard. We hold that judgment by the common standard implies the right to make common cause.

The Union of Post Office Workers, therefore, challenges the legislation of 1927. It asks the Government to agree with us that the Act of 1927 was Fascism. We have been asking them that question insistently ever since the war began. There are those in the Government who admire the legislation of 1927. We are not surprised. But as realists we believe it the duty of the workers to wipe that kind of legislation off the Statute Book of every country.

T. J. HODGSON

Others Are Waiting!

The demand for this paper is far greater than the supplies available within our paper ration. Are you prepared to forward your copy when you have read it? If so, kindly let the Publisher know and he will put you in touch with a member of the Forces or some other person unable to obtain a copy.

A LONDON DIARY

THE Executive will get its way at the Labour Party Conference on Communist affiliation. What will the Communists do then? They could take the Executive's advice, dissolve and then join the Party as individuals with the prospect, no doubt, of forming some kind of Left Wing group in the future. I doubt if they will do that, partly for reasons of prestige and so forth, and partly because in many areas well-known Communists might have more than a little difficulty in persuading local Labour officials that they were fit and proper persons to become individual members of the Party. The most sensible thing would be an alliance, but from what I know of the feeling against Communists in Transport House and amongst officials in many parts of the country, that could only come after much local pressure. My own view has never been dictated by love or hatred of any of the so-called progressive parties. I think there is one consideration which overrides arguments about "fundamental differences." As things stand the Tories will have things all their own way when the war ends, and we shall need the widest possible popular front, which means common action for an agreed programme. Such an alliance on a number of immediate post-war issues, internal and external, should include Labour and Communists; it should also accept Common Wealth and on many issues any Tories and Liberals who are not again prepared to see the same surrender to vested interests after this war as occurred in 1919.

* * *

Paul Rotha's film, *World of Plenty*, which is being shown this week at the Rialto, is much more than a first-class "documentary." It is a political event. It is the first satisfactory use of modern technique to explain to the public one of the great world problems about which common people as well as statesmen and technicians must be compelled to think. This film was shown to 300 delegates and pressmen at the World Food Conference at Hot Springs. A telegram shows that it was greeted with immense applause, and that after the show the American, Chinese, Egyptian and Indian delegates all demanded the opportunity to show it to their own publics. The telegram ends, "the film happens to summarise and set forth pictorially some of the most important conclusions of the Conference." How could it not? For the conclusions are forced upon any man who is not warped by a narrow personal or class interest. Roughly they are, first, that the world will need an immense expansion of food at the end of the war and the fullest application of modern science to increase production; unless we are mad enough to go back to restrictive capitalism, no farmer or primary producer need fear over-production. Secondly, that the problem of supplying people who are hungry (the Russians at Hot Springs rightly insisted that this included Russian needs now, during the war) is urgent, not academic. To devastated Europe after the war, to the undernourished millions of the Balkans, of China and India, building up charts of an ideal diet would seem mockery. Only the event will show whether Hot Springs has produced anything but hot air. But it was a good sign that the Russians, who began by saying nothing, later collaborated hard, and that the British and Americans discovered that efficient staff work was not impossible and that the small nations seem to have felt that they were given a proper share and not bossed about or passed over by the big Powers. But whether anything really comes of such Conferences largely depends on whether films like *World of Plenty* have made the issues so real to so many people that opposition to the deliberate planning of post-war expansion and distribution is politically impossible.

* * *

The story of the Yugoslav "partisans," which was published in this journal last week, gave many people a much more vivid understanding of the nature of the complex struggle now going on in occupied Europe. But no article is as good as personal contact; I can testify to that in this case because I was myself present at this interview and asked the partisans some of the questions recorded. Now the chance is offered to everyone. On Wednesday, June 16th, at 7.30 in the Livingstone Hall, Broadway, S.W.1, a Yugoslav "Any Question" meeting has been arranged by the Union of Democratic Control on the lines of the very successful French Brains Trust of a few weeks ago. The chair is being taken by Lord Marley, and the three partisans, whose experience of fighting in Yugoslavia were given here last week, are among those who will answer questions. The other members include several who talk excellent English. Stoyan Pribichevich, for instance, is an American Serb who has long worked for *Time and Life*, while Rudolf Bicanic is one of the leaders of the Croat peasant party and now vice-governor of the Bank of Yugoslavia He was for a time in prison with Dr. Macek, the great Croat peasant organiser whom Himmler has just moved from "protective arrest" in Zagreb to a concentration camp somewhere in the Reich. Serbs, Croats and Slovenes are all represented on this Brains Trust. Questions on any aspect of Yugoslav resistance will be welcomed at the U.D.C., 34 Victoria Street, S.W.1.

* * *

One other point about the story of the Yugoslav partisans. They wrote only of their own experiences of fighting in Yugoslavia in 1941–2, and of their unsuccessful attempt to collaborate with General Mihailovich, who at that time was boosted as the leader of all Yugoslav resistance. They told (in an incident that was not included in the printed interview) the detailed story of how his Chetniks raided a hospital where the staff came from the partisan forces and raped and killed the nurses. These included a sister of one of the partisans who is now in this country. They were naturally outraged that the B.B.C. should have played up Mihailovich as the real leader of all Yugoslav resistance and even attributed to him victories in battles which were won by them and in which he did not even participate. But it should be remembered that their personal experience ended with the summer of 1942. In recent months the truth about Mihailovich has been admitted even in official circles. The B.B.C. has now ceased to give him the credit and does not ignore the partisans in speaking of Yugoslav resistance. Most important, I notice that it has recently dropped the talks by the Yugoslav "Military Cabinet," which used its broadcasting opportunity not so much to aid the Allied cause or to build a united Yugoslavia, as to boost Serbian nationalism.

* * *

I do not know if Leslie Howard ever played a villain, and I doubt if he could have made a good job of it. The supreme actor has a fluidity of character that enables him to express the most repulsive feelings with a semi-sincerity; Leslie Howard, on the other hand, achieved his entirely deserved success by the art with which he externalised his own qualities—gentleness, humour, vagueness, unostentatious courage, sensibility and a genuine and unusual modesty. These are qualities that make up an ideal English type which no one could present more pleasingly. (I am told that he was half Hungarian!) But in addition he possessed a virtue much less usual among his countrymen — quick responsiveness to aesthetic excellence. This was symbolised by his performance in *49th Parallel*, when sight of a Picasso being destroyed by the Nazis turned the mildest of men into a tiger. In Leslie Howard himself this veneration for art showed itself alike in a devotion to the technique of acting and in an idolatry of Shakespeare. When he spoke in a Brains Trust, he revealed uncommon intelligence and an uncommon respect for intelligence. He was a most disinterested man who worried not at all about broadcasting fees and who would take endless pains with an "answering you" programme for America when his day was already very full at the studio and there was no special kudos to be won. He was so vague that it never seemed likely he would turn up, but he always did. He began by being quite unpolitical and acquired very progressive opinions. His interests were broad and his taste sensitive—qualities that will be the more missed because they are not the most conspicuous virtues of the movie world. His friends mourn one of the most charmingly affectionate of men, the public has lost an excellent artist and an irreplaceable champion of Anglo-American understanding.

CRITIC

HOT NEWS FROM HOT SPRINGS

"Once starvation has been prevented . . . emphasis will shift to the elimination of gross deficiencies of diet . . . ensuring subsistence for every man, woman and child in India, China and Africa."—*Times*.

The welfare and health of the world commonwealth
Is a challenge to planners' sagacity,
But the experts conclude that they rest upon food
And depend on stomachic capacity.
The glut and the shortage, the slump and the boom
Will always give cause for disquiet
Till Asia and Africa learn to consume
An ample yet minimum diet.

Food facts must be known in the tropical zone,
For they plan on the hopeful presumption
That global production for world reconstruction
Will be balanced by global consumption.
The era of plenty we cannot expect,
Nor make freedom from want a reality,
Till the underfed races are taught to reject
Their time-honoured cult of frugality.

Flesh, fat and proteins, fish, cereals and beans
Every man must be ready to swallow,
Grain, starches and fruits, seeds, tubers and roots,
With leguminous items to follow.
Bananas and yams must no longer suffice,
Nut-eating gives reason for worry,
Nor must natives persist in a diet of rice
With occasional sprinklings of curry.

The mild overeating prescribed by this meeting
Can solve the world's ills economic,
And they see no resistance to standard subsistence
Except from some cause anatomic.
The Conference therefore to mankind appeals
To get down to the job with tenacity—
All must learn to sit fast and face up to their meals,
And enlarge their stomachic capacity.

SAGITTARIUS

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to V. Rosetti.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Post-war aim of the National Federation of Friers, outlined by Mr. Henry Youngman, of Leeds, the chairman, in London yesterday, is that people must be able to walk into fish-frying shops and maintain their dignity.—*Daily Mail.*

FOR YOUR LIBRARY.

George Formby selects these three books:
1. The Holy Bible.
2. Chambers's Dictionary.
3. The Ringer. By Edgar Wallace.

—*Sunday Pictorial.*

The "colour bar," as they call it, was put there by God, not man, and they should carry it with the pride and honour of their race and kind.—A letter in the *South Wales Echo.*

GUMMED-UP CARPETS? Don't let Gum-ruin cheat you or allow the gum to remain as a source of danger from fire. We can remove all traces of chewing-gum—cleanly, completely and at very little cost.—Advert. in *Theatre World.*

RARA AVIS

As I was walking through the Temple the other day, I heard a bird whose song I could not recognise singing among the ruins. It was a very short song and it was not particularly beautiful; but, as I had never heard it before, in the Temple or anywhere else, I was sufficiently interested to stop for a moment or two in the hope of identifying the bird that was producing notes so original in the heart of London. At first, I thought, my ear might be deceiving me—for I know little about birds—and that some common bird like a robin might be casually singing a note or two, varying its song as robins often do. A few days later, however, on hearing the bird among the ruins again, I suspected that it must be a stranger to London, and it was with pleasure that I read in the *Times* the next day that someone else had even seen the bird and identified it as a black redstart.

Probably, if black redstarts were as common as chaffinches, we should think less of them; but, as they happen to be rarities—to the common eye, at least—the appearance of a black redstart in the City pleases the imagination like a visit from the Cham of Tartary. The birds that one has never seen, or has seen only rarely, have a beauty that none of the familiar birds, however beautiful, can rival. The first time that one sees a new bird is an occasion that remains in the memory. I remember clearly seeing a black redstart near Steyning shortly after the end of the last war. One experienced an elation like that of stout Cortes in different circumstances as one watched it, black of body and with the bar of red-hot iron near its tail, flying across the road to a small cottage,. Never since then have I seen black redstarts except at Varangeville in August, when they were flitting about the cliff-path up which the Commando troops climbed last year during the raid on Dieppe. Once more the world became a lovelier aviary because of their presence, but once more the loveliness was due to the rarity of the bird rather than to any superiority it possessed over the common jay or the commoner blue tit.

One of the worst features of a zest for bird-watching is the way in which one again and again succumbs to the passion for the quest of the *rara avis*. There are no birds to surpass the commonest birds—the larks, the blackbirds, the thrushes, the robins, the wrens and the tits—yet, when one acquires a taste for amateur ornithology, one becomes as restless in one's search after novelties as Alexander in his longing for more worlds to conquer. Only the birds we have never seen belong to an Arabia of the mind. Lovely though they are—and through their associations they have inspired better poetry than the others—the birds we know best lack that element of foreignness that has made men travel during the centuries in pursuit of something new. To discover a new bird is like reaching a South Sea island for the first time. Try to imagine what it must be like to see for the first time a wall-creeper, a bee-eater, or an Arctic bluethroat.

To the learned ornithologists, of course, few birds are rarities. They seem to find wrynecks in every April wood, and spotted flycatchers in every garden. Most of us, however—perhaps luckily—have neither the time nor the persistence to discover how common many birds besides sparrows are. Terns, for example, the most graceful of all the birds of the sea, are said to be fairly common—the tern according to one authority, "nests all round our shores . . . and large numbers visit us on passage"—but to me they are rarities that I can remember having seen only at St. Ives, Hastings, and, best and most numerous of all, in clouds of thousands of them, at Conall Ferry. In matters of this kind, I think, the ignorant bird watcher has an advantage over the expert. He has more Newfoundlands to reach. He is like a bad golfer with a universe of unconquered worlds before him. There is no man whom I envy less than the ornithologist who has seen, heard and identified every bird mentioned in an authoritative list of British birds, including the olivaceous warbler, the East Siberian meadow bunting, Hornemann's redpoll, and the white-tailed eagle. Probably, however, there has never been such a man. I have known experienced ornithologists who had never even seen or heard a Tengmalm's owl, that delightful whistler whom I once listened to as he sat on a roof top near an Essex estuary.

Even when they are not rare, fortunately, birds can give us pleasure by some rarity in their behaviour. A few years ago thousands—or, at least, hundreds—of people were excited by the news that a cormorant had not only visited London but perched on the cross above the dome of St. Paul's. To a rational eye a cormorant would be much more interesting when diving oilily after fish in the seas round Cornwall. But any cormorant might dive under the waves round Cornwall. There was only one cormorant that was ever original enough to roost on the cross of St. Paul's. Hence he became for the moment the most interesting of all cormorants—an exception to the rule, like a fraudulent company promoter who suddenly becomes sensational "news." He was the only cormorant—or, at least, one of the very few cormorants—of whom the British press ever took any notice. Unconventional rather than conventional behaviour, it is to be feared, is the easy way to fame.

And even a chaffinch can get into the news by appearing in unexpected places. The chaffinch—one of the commonest English birds—though it is plentiful in the suburbs, is said seldom to penetrate to the heart of London, and when a chaffinch is seen in St. James's Park you will find overjoyed ornithologists writing to the papers about it. Even a duck becomes doubly interesting when you see it swimming in one of those water tanks constructed on the site of a bombed building in Victoria Street. A duck in Victoria Street is as unexpected a sight as a nightingale in Berkeley Square—as unexpected a sight, indeed, as the yellow wheeled hansom I saw being driven along Fleet Street the other day. If you want to excite the interest of Londoners to-day, you should ride down Piccadilly, not on a motor-cycle, but on a Victorian bicycle of the penny-farthing style.

At the same time, the appetite for rarity provides us, it seems to me, with pleasures that are superficial in comparison with the pleasure we get from common things. Rarity appeals mainly to the love of the sensational. The Taj Mahal, no doubt, is a wonderful sight to see, but it does not evoke emotions so profound as the sight of one's own cottage. Similarly, it is delightful to see for the first time the grebes in Richmond Park performing their courtship ceremonies, but how much more delightful it is to watch a common sparrow feeding her flutter-winged young, beak to beak! The sparrow has seldom had justice done to it in modern times. Yet how friendly are its quarrelsome jargonnings to the human ear! And who can deny that, in the words of an eminent ornithologist, "when clean, the cock-sparrow is an exceedingly handsome bird"? Yet all that a modern poet thought worth saying about this Adonis of the garden was, "How I hate the sparrows!" The sparrow, it is true, has been celebrated in some fine verse, but this, I think, was usually the result of a misunderstanding. Some poets, like some modern schoolboys, call almost any bird a sparrow.

The cock chaffinch is a still handsomer bird than the sparrow, but he has had even fewer compliments paid to him by the poets. It is odd that so companionable a bird should have attracted so little affection. Companionable, perhaps is an exaggeration, but the chaffinch at least will stand on the grass and sing within a few feet of one's chair, showing none of that suspicion of mankind which is a characteristic of so many birds. His song, too, is of all bird songs the most expressive of robust-heartedness, yet the cuckoo with his two notes which, to many people, are expressive only of deception, has achieved a hundred times greater glory in literature. This may be because the cuckoo is exceptional even in his wickedness and, though not a rarity to the ear, is a comparative rarity to the eye.

This year, it seems to me, there are fewer birds in England than in the springs of the past. Were clouds of the migrants turned back, I wonder, by the tumult in the skies above North Africa? Whatever may be the reason, I have never heard so few willow wrens and chiffchaffs in my neighbourhood in May and early June. It is said that in some districts, misunderstanding a B.B.C. broadcast, the schoolchildren have been killing all the birds within range, in the interests of agriculture. But I do not think that this has happened in my own parish. Still, with flycatchers and goldcrests in the garden, and two cock chaffinches dancing up and down in the air like midges as they fight, one cannot complain of being impoverished. And there is still a sight of the black redstart in the Temple to look forward to. I would give almost anything—except my lunchtime—to have a look at him.

Y. Y.

THE S's OF DORTMUND

Before the recent big raids on Dortmund I was glad that it had been spared a major bombardment. Of course, I knew about its importance as a transport junction and centre of industry, and I had seen for myself something of these functions and watched the Nazis practising their A.A. defences there during one of those Luftwaffe demonstrations that were so ominous a part of German life after 1933. Of course, I knew that its luck could not last, but I hoped against the strength of my hatred of Fascism that it might get no worse than small raids, directed scrupulously against military targets, which would give the S's a sporting chance of surviving them.

For the S's are the only German family I have known, and I have not needed to know any more to be convinced of the dangerous nonsense of Vansittartism; that is, unless living quietly and inoffensively, working hard, despising Hitler and all that he means, and being devout Catholics constitute a black record.

They found me, a solitary foreigner, in August, 1937, wandering about the Black Forest, and invited me to stay with them up in Dortmund. I shared their home, met their friends (one a Jew), ate their butterless food, and talked with them far into the night, about Jesus Christ, about whom we often disagreed, and Hitler, about whom we always agreed. With the help of a small dictionary which we kept ready to hand and of our refusal to be dictated to by the mistakes of the past and the obvious progression of the present, we agreed that although another war was inevitable sooner or later and we should officially be enemies, so far as we were concerned this would be no more than an unfortunate irrelevance. Strangers but a few days earlier, hardly able to speak more than half a dozen words of each other's language, at variance about religion, already enemies once before, we had rejected the artifice of the national frontier and disproved the generalisations of the politician. Before Hitler had lost, we had won.

Young S was, of course, in the Hitler Youth. He had to be if he was to get a job after he left school. He was young. He was thrilled with the uniform, the parades, the band and his own promotion, and whereas God and Christ were distant and unreal to him, Hitler was near and real; Hitler was to him what Hitler would have been to the youth of any country similarly placed; youth cannot have a black record.

Father and mother S knew the danger, but could do nothing about it. To do anything, to try to do anything, would have been to destroy their son, for that is how it is in Germany. Their house was already divided, and all they could do was to try to keep it from utter collapse. By now young S is probably a frozen corpse in Russia or a sweating prisoner in Africa. He was doomed when I met him; we knew that, father, mother and I—that he was so soon a prisoner in the enemy's camp.

But we did not know that they, too, were doomed, that within six years they would have dropped on them 2,000 tons of explosive in one hour. Well, they've had to, and, I am supposed to say, "Serve 'em right; Hitler started it." Yes, he did, and the slaughter is inevitable. But it is the inevitable slaughter of some innocents, for the S's are innocent, having themselves suffered more at the hands of the Nazis than most of us have.

So I think of them, my friends of the "flaming chaos" of Dortmund, friends whose name I dare not speak. Through the monstrous din of that hour of terror I hear mother S calling me in the morning and father S telling me that what the Nazis had done to his son was the tragedy of his life, and through the rubble and the fire I go again with them to the quaint beer-cellar late at night and sit and gape in wonder at the search-lights and the imitation flak on that peaceful evening when the Luftwaffe came to town. And as the noise droops away I hear them tell me that we are still friends. We are. There's nothing the Nazi bosses or the pseudo-democrats over here can do about that. For we fight the real war, the international war of the German and English man-in-the-street against the Fascist wherever he exists. In the present war Dortmund town is going to get worse still, and there are going to be many Dortmunds all over the world. But they don't really matter. The buildings don't matter; it is we who matter. For as long as we hold on to our friendship and our ideal, as long as Mr. and Mrs. S don't let our block-busters drive them into the Nazis' camp, and as long as I don't let the specious promises of those here who pose as my champions turn me into a "little conservative," then we, the S's of Dortmund and of London, can stick all the "prangings" coming to us and know that when all the quislings, collaborationists, comic-opera monarchies and ambitious generals are squabbling around the peace-table, we at least came through it all with a clean record.

W. G. B.

JUDGE BEN LINDSEY

By the recent death of Judge Ben B. Lindsey, America has lost a universal citizen and reformer. Born in Tennessee 73 years ago, Lindsey, became known over the world as creator of the Juvenile Court. He took reluctantly to the study of law and at thirty was a county judge in Denver. In this first experience on the bench he came upon the raw facts of politics and legal practice in a frontier State. Colorado with its mining camps, the rapacity of its new cities and its embittered race conflicts was a region of the rankest lawlessness. Characteristically Lindsey went into action against the party machines and their corrupt allies, and told the story in his first book, *The Beast and the Jungle*. Meanwhile, the daily hearings in court led him to a conclusion that became the key to all his later activities. In Colorado, as everywhere else at that time, the juvenile delinquent was treated merely as a criminal subject to the common torments of police court and penitentiary. Lindsey challenged this procedure and every one of its assumptions. These neglected youngsters, he declared, were the product of ignorance and a ghastly environment. Boys and girls alike should be kept away from the police and the gaol. Their need was for understanding and guidance. He preached this doctrine with the fervour of an apostle, and as the years went on, with an abundance of exciting illustrations. Over the special Juvenile and Family Relations Court of Denver he presided for more than twenty years, with full freedom for his own methods.

His room had nothing of the criminal court about it. No lawyers were present, and the youngsters were not put in the dock. Lindsey found the way to elicit confession and all the relevant facts. For girls in trouble, especially, his unvarying rule was a private interview, without parent or teacher. They came, as he said, voluntarily and alone. He first gained their confidence and then sought co-operation from others concerned. He affirmed that between 80 and 90 per cent. of them never afterwards returned to the court. Girl mothers were shielded from disgrace, and from the abortionist. His consistent advice was that the infant should be born; and happily adoption in the West involved no difficulty. Lindsey came to be looked upon as an unfailing friend of the adolescent mother, and inevitably he was denounced for encouraging laxity, seeking the destruction of the home. He was an eager and confident little man. His manner tended to infuriate orthodox upholders of the old order, particularly, as he put it, "the reactionary elements of the Church and the Bar." Nothing could prevent Ben Lindsey from telling the boys that they were not bad, or from assuring the peccant girls that they were really fine young Americans. You could not make him believe there was any other way of making them so.

Lindsey's judgeship was elective; he had to fight a dozen campaigns in order to hold it. His enemies were incessantly active and in 1927 they succeeded in displacing him. Two years later, on a charge of professional misconduct that was obviously manufactured, they got him disbarred in Colorado. Thereupon he left Denver for Los Angeles, was admitted to the Bar of California, and for nine years, until his death, was a judge of the State Supreme Court. It is not impossible that if he had refrained from authorship he might have held on to the office with which he had become so completely identified; but his books were filled with high explosive. In *The Revolt of Modern Youth* (1925) he told the story of the Juvenile Court, with the aid of a series of personal narratives so extraordinary that to a novelist on the hunt they must have seemed like treasure-trove. Lindsey had witnessed the growth of Denver from a frontier station to a city of 300,000 people. This expansion had coincided with unprecedented social changes, which included Prohibition, the ubiquitous motor car, and a speedy breakdown of old restraints. The Judge's revelations were sensational. His critics asserted that they were grossly exaggerated and that he had kept no records. His retort was an action characteristically dramatic. He made a bonfire of his court papers, saying that here was a pyre of shame which for many hundreds of his fellow citizens had wiped out a latent terror.

In the year of his defeat, Lindsey published *The Companionate Marriage*. This book aroused a nation-wide tempest in which the Juvenile Court and its annals were almost submerged. He knew in advance that he would be abused as the most dangerous advocate of what is known in America as trial marriage, on behalf of which, as a matter of fact, he had nothing to say. He believed emphatically in early marriage and marital fidelity, but the temptation of the label was irresistible. His proposals, he argued, actually involved no more than the regularising of conditions and practices already established and recognised. The Lindsey programme had four points: birth control, divorce by mutual consent if there were no children, abolition of the injustices of alimony, and sex education for the young and for married couples. If this was radicalism, said he, we might be sure that it would prove to be the conservatism of to-morrow. Speaking with unequalled knowledge of the actualities of American marriage along with reckless divorce, he was entirely convinced that these changes or something equivalent to them were necessary and urgent for the United States. How far Ben Lindsey can be said to have advanced the cause of constructive marriage reform by his agitation and personality, one would not venture to say. His reputation and his highest value lay in the other direction. The Juvenile Court was his real discovery, and it will stand as his monument.

S. K. RATCLIFFE

ADVERTISED GOODS.—The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this paper should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.

FOUR MORE MATINÉES

Yes, only four more: at the St. James's Theatre on June 14th, 15th, 21st and 22nd. And the performance in English of Henri Becque's famous comedy *La Parisienne* is a pleasure not to be missed. Moreover, you will be increasing British Equity's war-relief fund by going to see it, though in the theatre you will only be aware that you are enjoying thoroughly some fine acting and a very good play. What sort of reflections the play may start will depend partly on your age and partly on your moral convictions; but *La Parisienne* can be enjoyed just as much by those who do not reflect as by those who do, which is equivalent to saying that it is first-rate comedy.

It was first performed in 1885, and, if I am not mistaken, it was Henri Becque's last play, though he lived till 1899. He was the forerunner of the "slice of life" dramatic movement inaugurated by Antoine at *Le Théâtre Libre* in 1887; or if you prefer to describe his work as the bridge between the theatrical social moralism of Dumas *fils* and Emile Augier and the later naturalists that will also define Becque's place (important) in the history of the modern stage.

When a writer is a thorough master of his craft he can have no better luck, as far as posterity is concerned, than to be representative of a period of transition. He often escapes the over-confident extravagances of the movement he precedes when it is at its height, while his work still draws upon the sound experience of a waning tradition in which he learnt his art. Yet this position does not necessarily win for him contemporary success. Becque's rare talent, his detached irony, his merciless, amused observation, were at once recognised, but not entirely enjoyed at the time. Only after French audiences had got tired of the inferior cynicism of pessimistic naturalists, did his comedie penetration win full recognition. *La Parisienne* is now firmly established among the favourite plays of the French stage and in the repertory of the Comédie Française. The part of Clotilde, its heroine, was one of Réjane's greatest triumphs. I saw her act it in 1901. Our stage may well be proud of having produced in Miss Dresdel a by no means insignificant successor.

The scene is laid in the Eighties in Paris, and Miss Dresdel has the advantage, too, of looking exactly like a lovely early Renoir portrait. Do you remember the picture of the lady in a black dress in a theatre box from the Courtauld collection? Well, it is *she* who rushes on to the empty stage, exposed just long enough to be recognised as an elegant period bourgeois boudoir. She makes at once for a bureau to conceal a letter. Hardly has she turned the lock or pretended to do so, when a man, pale, tense and panting with agitation, enters. The opening words of the dialogue are: "Give me that letter." "No." (Pause.) "Open that bureau and give me that letter." "I'd rather not." (A longer pause, during which there is an impish expression on her face.) "Where have you been?" "Ah, that's quite a different question." "It is: I ask you, *where have you been?*" This leads up to one of the best prepared "sells" in modern comedy. The scene which follows is to all appearances the familiar jealousy rumpus between Monsieur and Madame. It develops along classic lines, Madame on the defensive, taking the ominous line of——well, of course, *if* you won't trust me, here are the keys. I can't help the consequences, *only* you may not like them; while Monsieur, somewhat daunted, yet hoping against hope that he is not weak, begins to think it might be more prudent to appeal to her better nature: "Clotilde, think of my feelings; consider your own. Don't yield to temptation. While you are faithful to me you are true to yourself and your honour. But the day you deceive me . . ." "Take care," she whispers, "my husband is coming." And there and then, in this frightened whisper and the entry of that comfy man, M. du Mesnil, the whole ironic situation which the comedy proceeds to develop, explodes in a dramatic surprise which brings down the house with laughter.

The theme is the reversal of the traditional roles of lover and husband, or rather to be more accurate, an exhibition, never deviating a hair's-breadth from probability, of how extremely conjugal a relation between a lover and a married mistress can be. For better and for worse, Clotilde and Lafont (Mr. Michael Redgrave) are a thoroughly connubial couple.

Now whether this strikes you as an essentially comedic situation, depends on your view of marriage. The comic dramatist always tacitly, if not openly, appeals to accepted standards either of morality or manners or common sense. In proportion as those standards lose authority the comedy which implies them ceases to be really amusing. To an audience which sees nothing specially serious in marriage, there is nothing particularly comic in Clotilde having two husbands—which at one point she admits is her embarrassing predicament. Nor would they find any irony in Lafont being so oblivious of any difference between himself and Clotilde's husband, that in addition to being possessive and jealous he is downright prudish. He vehemently objects to her friendship with a woman who is unfaithful to her husband. Nor would they feel it in her reproach (though he hotly denies the justice of this charge) of not loving "Adolph" enough. And such an audience would hardly consider the dramatist painfully cynical who presented a pair of guilty lovers as coming to enthusiastic accord (for a moment) on the general principle that what both men and women want from each other is a steady affection.

To measure to-day the impression this play made on its appearance and for years afterwards, we must imagine a *ménage à trois* in which Clotilde's legitimate husband was the man who satisfied her senses and her heart; while her lover-husband was one whose every motive of self-interest and gratitude induced her to keep happy at all costs, even that of exercising a perpetual and tantalising adroitness—after all exciting fun, for she is marvellously adapted for the management of rather stupid males. Then, and only then, would she appear as the frivolous little monster she seemed to her contemporaries; as one whose serenity of conscience together with that of her lover's illustrated so amusingly, but painfully, one of the main themes of Comedy, namely, the contrast between our view of ourselves and that taken by others who apply the principles we also profess to accept.

Before the end of the play Clotilde exasperated by Lafont's jealousy which has long ceased to be flattering and reassuring, and become an incessant interference, tries another and younger lover. But he proves such a disappointing stick that this passing affair only benefits the two husbands. And here I must say with all the emphasis I can that something must be done, and done quickly, about the opening scene of Act III between her and Simpson. No one would infer that this was a parting between ex-lovers. The rest of the performance is so admirable that it is a shame there should be such a lapse in it as this scene. The only other hint I have to give as a critic is to Lafont. Mr. Redgrave plays admirably his jealous exasperation and helpless, easily passified indignation, but makes him too sincerely simple. He forgets at times that Lafont is a figure in detached ruthless Comedy, and that he is a character intended to excite more laughter than compassion. And now a final word about Miss Sonia Dresdel's Clotilde. This is a triumph equal to her Hedda which we have seen so recently. She has an extraordinary gift for conveying an *arrière-pensée* which is in conflict with what she is actually saying, and this faculty is essential to the part. You can read her thoughts, and guess at her next move from her face and gestures. She can be gaily and elegantly ambiguous and transmit to us the delicious malicious pleasure of Clotilde in her own adroitness. It is a treat not to be missed.

DESMOND MACCARTHY

THE MOVIES

"World of Plenty," at the Rialto
"The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp," at the Odeon
"Hangmen Also Die," at the Tivoli
"The Silent Village," and "Theatre Royal," at the Regal

By far the best and most original film of the week is the M.O.I. documentary, *World of Plenty*. Its subject is food, the production of food, its uneven distribution and waste in peacetime, the control made necessary by war, the necessity of world planning after the war. A subject, you might think, that *March of Time* could skim over tensely with a few headlines and a drum-roll; but as material for a full-length film—? Paul Rotha and the late Eric Knight have done the trick. *World of Plenty* runs for just under an hour and it keeps the excitement of a *March of Time* "short" while knocking a hole in a problem that might daunt the most experienced pamphleteer. No meatier piece of exposition and propaganda has ever forced its way into our cinemas, but it isn't—what it might so easily have been—a mere fibrous chunk. Facts and argument are combined with a beautiful lucidity, an appeal to the eye as well as the mind, so that while we are listening, say, to Sir John Orr stating inexorably the case for world planning, scenes in fields, factories and docks tether the argument to living people. Rotha has elaborated a number of devices for holding our attention. He interviews not only his experts—Sir John Orr, Lord Woolton, Lord Horder, Mr. L. F. Easterbrook and others—but a Londoner going shopping, a Middle West farmer, a policeman on point duty; the camera picks them up and they talk out of the screen. Narrators, English and American, swing the argument across continents, ask and answer questions as they go. Sometimes an important fact or series of facts or the deduction from them has to be repeated. There is a vivid and dramatic use of maps. Isotypes ram home the point of such a sentence as "Income levels in the United Kingdom are distributed as follows: out of twenty income-earners, fourteen receive £2 or less a week, and one is a very rich man"—we see the one rich man shooting up like a column of mercury from the rank of his fellows. By such methods—and they are endlessly varied—even the least tractable of facts, the most age-worn phrases can be brought to life. The famous argument, for example, of coffee poured into the sea regains its striking power when we are shown a picture of the coffee being actually poured. For many people who stumble upon *World of Plenty* unexpectedly in their local programmes, Rotha's use of the screen may come as a surprise: not everyone knows the extent to which films, in school and army instruction, have displaced the lecturer and his blackboard. Here is a medium, more emphatic than the daily newspaper, for bringing facts to life and impressing policies; a weapon, therefore, of immense cultural and political significance. Luckily it is one that would fall to pieces in the hands of anyone but a brilliant technician with his imagination at full stretch, and such technical audacity is not at the disposal of retrograde politicians. New methods do, up to a point, imply new views. *World of Plenty* is a front-page story and a leading article thrown at the heads of cinema goers, and, whatever its success or failure as entertainment, it will implant a seed.

The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp. Why three hours of it? Why in Technicolor? Why this and that? One has more than enough time for doubts, and for long stretches the slowness of this piece is not concealed by surface liveliness. Low's effigy is given a heart, a history, a place in the events of the last fifty years. He won the V.C. in South Africa. He was crossed in love. He shot gazelles and elephants. He retired and came back with the Home Guard. He was a gentleman—and not quite such a pachyderm as Low has suggested. The rehabilitation of a brave, modest, stupid and kindly man has been gracefully, though not without some dullness, achieved. Roger Livesey gives a solid and likeable performance as the Colonel. Anton Walbrook is even more sympathetic as his best friend, a German officer with whom he fought a duel as a young man; and Deborah Kerr, in several rôles as the feminine ideal who haunts the Colonel's ever-boyish affection, displays charm variously. On the whole, despite some flagging in the middle years (the sequences of the last war look drearily stagy in colour), this is an intelligent, warm, spectacular and well-intentioned film.

Hangmen Also Die is a thriller, and *The Silent Village* a poem, about Heydrich. Each good of its kind. Fritz Lang's two-hour film is fiction bearing no relation to the facts, but harsh photography, first-rate acting and Lang's morbid preoccupation make this one of the best shockers about the Nazis I have seen. Humphrey Jennings has shown imagination in transposing Lidice and a village in the Swansea Valley, where the terrible vengeance for Heydrich's assassination is worked out. The Welsh voices and landscape, miners, a school classroom, cottage interiors, the executioner's loudspeaker bawling down an empty street, provide the hints of a tragedy that has wiped out not only Lidice, but countless villages in Poland, Russia and China. The only fault of this film, if it has one, is that it's a shade too reticent.

Theatre Royal in the same programme has Flanagan, but, being in the tradition of English comic films, is as painful as a visit to the dentist.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

Correspondence

LABOUR AND COMMUNISTS

SIR,—The Labour Party Executive have been deprived of their original objection to the affiliation of the Communist Party by the dissolution of the Comintern. In fact, the international argument had been turned against them, for it is now clear that if the Labour Party wishes to co-operate with the Soviet workers, or the workers of China, or with the leaders of the working class in the underground resistance movements in Europe, they can do so only by co-operating with Communists. The working-class parties that will emerge after victory will contain both Socialists and Communists and any future Workers' International can come into existence only if it includes both.

Beaten on the international plane the N.E.C. have now fallen back on purely national arguments. First, they argue that the very fact of the C.P. wishing to affiliate as a party instead of dissolving in order that Communists may enter the Labour Party as individual members, is a proof of bad faith. But originally the Labour Party was a federation of T.U.'s and Socialist parties and societies, some of them Marxist. The constitution of the Labour Party expressly provides for the affiliation of bodies that accept its constitution and rules.

Second, the N.E.C. admit the need for working-class unity and the desirability of the Labour Party becoming "a great consolidated political party of the Left." But they say it is a waste of time to attempt "to unite opposing political principles of a fundamental character." The opposing principles are said to be the Communist party's belief in dictatorship versus the Labour Party's faith in democracy.

The difference between Labour and the Communists is merely on how far the normal processes of constitutional democracy will work in effecting the transition from capitalism to socialism.

In its manifesto of June 2nd, the C.P. of Great Britain says: "We stand for the fullest utilisation of Parliamentary democratic forms and methods. When we declare at the same time that the working-class movement must be prepared for the use of violent methods by reaction, the experience of many countries has borne this out, and our viewpoint is shared by many representatives within the Labour Party."

On p. 18 of a new Fabian pamphlet entitled *Marx and To-day*, Mr. Harold Laski, a member of the N.E.C., writes:

> There is no reason to believe that when their fundamental power is challenged British capitalists will act very differently from those of France or Germany or the United States. The Labour Party may insist upon its constitutional rights, should it win an electoral majority, to use political power, the power given to it by the masses, to satisfy what it deems their legitimate expectations; to our capitalists the threat of that political power to their security, thereby to the privileges that security maintains, will tend to obscure the validity of constitutional right.
>
> That is the lesson of Italian Fascism; it is the lesson of Nazism in Germany; it is the lesson of the Civil War in Spain; less dramatically, but none the less truly, it is the lesson of 1931 in Britain and of the New Deal in the United States. . . . When democratic institutions threaten the capitalist foundations of society, capitalists, if they can, embrace counter-revolution in order to overthrow democratic institutions.

There are differences of detail and emphasis between this analysis and the Communist Party's view of the

limitations of capitalist democracy, but there is certainly no opposition of principle. The *Memorandum on Parliamentary Problems and Procedure* adopted by the Annual Conference of the Labour Party at Southport in 1934 again differs in detail and degree from Mr. Laski, but certainly not in principle, for it contemplates the possibility of capitalist sabotage on a scale sufficient to create a national emergency, accompanying or succeeding the return to power at the polls of a Labour Government, and discusses the extraordinary powers and measures that would have to be taken to deal with such a situation.

Mr. Hugh Dalton, also a member of the N.E.C., and an important member of the present National Government, in his book, *Practical Socialism for Britain*, has a chapter on Emergency Legislation, which quotes from and closely follows the lines of the 1934 memorandum. He also contemplates the possibility of capitalist "direct action" to oppose the measures of a Labour Government, and discusses the powers that would have to be assumed and wielded by such a government in a national emergency where there would be no time for lengthy discussion but only for "brisk action."

There is irreconcilable opposition between the conception of those Communists on the one hand who have never allowed for the difference between British and Russian conditions, and on the other, of Right Wing Labour leaders, who would use the plea of devotion to constitutional democracy as their excuse for capitulating to reaction and ultimately Fascism, exactly as did their German prototypes.

But there is no difference of principle between the views of realistic Communists and realistic Socialists on the issue of democracy versus dictatorship, although undoubtedly there are considerable differences of detail.

If the Labour Party therefore really means what it says about the desirability of working-class unity, both national and international, it should demand as one of the conditions for accepting the affiliation of the C.P., that they should subscribe to the Labour Party's 1934 Memorandum on Parliamentary Problems and Procedure. For the views of democracy and Parliamentary government, of the dangers that might threaten them if a Labour Government were returned to power, and of how those dangers, if and when they arose, should be met, are such that they should form the basis of sincere agreement between Socialists and Communists.

A LABOUR CANDIDATE

SIR,—Being not yet thirty years of age I hope I may be regarded as one of the "less elderly" in accordance with the term used in your article.

My own view on this vital problem of the companionship of nations is based on a knowledge of pre-war political developments in one of the Central European countries (my birthplace) supplemented by a close study of the political scene over here since acquiring British citizenship by marriage. I agree that the urgency of this issue turns on the European rather than the British aspect.

May I, however, be allowed to express the fervent hope that the young people of Britain will *not* be prepared to overlook what you choose to call the less admirable peculiarities of the Communist Party, i.e., blindness to the political situation in our own country, a love of intrigue and an indifference to truth in propaganda?

Whatever may have been the impression left by your article on other readers I can only say that the conclusion left with me was as follows: The Labour Movement lacks courage and a religious faith; it has so far been unable to recruit young people to the extent hoped for; let the Party then give encouragement to a new line of appeal based on a blind faith, intrigue and an indifference to integrity. Surely courage and a religious faith are only to be regarded as worth-while qualities if based on a love of truth and a hatred of intrigue?

It is not without interest to note that in the same issue "Critic" refers to the statement put out by the students of Munich University wherein the Nazi Party is rightly pilloried for its "destruction of all personal freedom, all freedom of thought and all moral principles." In effect, these courageous young people are saying faith, youth and daring are not enough.

My own knowledge of British youth leads me to the belief that whatever may be the reasons why a greater number of them have not responded to Labour's appeal in the past there can be no future for a party which is prepared to overlook the peculiarities of the Communist Party to which you refer.

MARLI K. HUDDLESTON

[Yeast has awkward properties, but you can't make beer without it. Inside the Labour Party and with no Comintern instructions to follow, the C.P. would have to take account of the outlook and traditions of the rest of the British Labour Movement. Otherwise the process will continue by which those who are keen find themselves frustrated within the Labour Party, leave it to flirt with Communism and then, disillusioned, drift away. To foster the virtues of both parties within a single Socialist movement may be much to expect, but it is a better objective than a stultifying war between the two bodies.—ED. *N.S. & N.*]

PLAIN SPEAKING

SIR,—"A Labour Candidate" writing in your issue of June 5th about the implications of the Atlantic Charter, asks whether Poland should not "surrender Teschen, the territory of which Colonel Beck despoiled Czechoslovakia at Munich?" May I be permitted to assure "A Labour Candidate" that the political action taken by the Polish Government in occupying the Teschen area found no popular support in Poland and that it was objected to by many writers? May I be allowed to assure "A Labour Candidate" that the younger generation of Poles is animated with a strong will to come to an agreement with Czechoslovakia, that we regret deeply all frictions between our two nations and that we are convinced that such problems as Teschen should be solved in the spirit of true understanding? If we accept the point of view that all the States should be rebuilt in their pre-war frontiers, then we have to accept the fact that Czechoslovakia should be reconstituted within her *pre-Munich frontiers*. This is obvious to every Pole wishing for a collaboration with Czechoslovakia which is essential for the security and well-being of our two countries.

"A Labour Candidate" suggests that the Ukrainian movement was "fostered by Poles." This is a rather surprising statement. Until now Poles have been accused of suppressing the Ukrainian movement for independence, now they are accused of fostering it. There are many books on Ukrainian history and aspirations, some of them published in this country and written by English authors. "A Labour Candidate" should be advised to consult one of those books before passing such an arbitrary verdict on a rather complicated matter. The Ukrainian problem has certainly not been invented by Poland and it will not disappear because of certain judgments and pronouncements which betray a good deal of ignorance of history and politics.

DR. Z. GRABOWSKI

WELLS AND HENRY JAMES

SIR,—I note that Mr. Logan Pearsall Smith tells how I pilloried my old friend Henry James in *Boon*. He omits to say that my quite good-tempered guying of the Master's style in *Boon* followed an ungracious attack James made in The *Times Literary Supplement* on the meticulous circumstantial methods of Arnold Bennett. He compared this to squeezing everything there was out of an "exceedingly dirty sponge." It is news to me that my old friend went about calling me a "phrophet". I cannot imagine what it means. To use the exquisite language of Mr. Logan Pearsall Smith, I "adumbrate a query."

H. G. WELLS

THE NEGLECTED VILLAGE

SIR,—The National Federation of Women's Institutes, deploring the state of affairs disclosed by evacuation and seeking remedies, was responsible for the writing of "Our Towns," so feelingly reviewed by Joan Clarke in your columns. I am moved to

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JONATHAN CAPE

ask whether an inquiry might not be made into conditions in our villages, where dirt is not so obvious as in the towns, but where complacency and smugness give rise to evils less easily cured than lousiness and bed-wetting.

The hope that the end of this war will mean the abolition of town slums is widespread, but few seem aware of bad housing, lack of hygiene, poor diet and deplorably low standards of education in the villages. Space does not permit more than a reference to the first three factors, but the appalling state of rural education is an urgent matter on which something more must be said.

Even more than in the towns, the schooling offered to country children bears no relationship to the lives they may expect to live, and gives them no desire to seek even the simplest culture. The worst imaginable school buildings, teachers either not sufficiently trained or harassed by lack of equipment and by large classes of mixed age groups seem to be considered good enough.

I could point to a certain country junior school (one miserable room with a wood and glass partition) of which the headmistress-cum-infant teacher cum-junior teacher recently resigned and apparently no one can be found to take her place. To-day, after the Easter holidays, nineteen children, ages four to eleven, arrived on the doorstep but soon returned home—no teacher, no schooling. It is not the first time that this has happened.

The eleven-pluses walk two miles to a so-called senior school, consisting of one class of more than forty children taken in all subjects by the headmistress. The walk would not hurt these children apart from the fact that their mid-day meal consists of sandwiches—hardly the best diet for the growing adolescent. But on wet, windy or any other kind of days not considered quite normal the whole contingent refuses to walk. There are also those who feel (and are apparently supported by their parents) that a pleasant sunny day is no time to go to school. I cannot provide exact statistics on absenteeism, but I can assert without doubt that the figure is incredibly high.

The results of these conditions are apparent in the average villager. Worse than the dirt and the bad manners of the town evacuee, because it will take so much longer to eradicate, is the closed mind of the cottage dweller. Soon a new generation of village complacency will have arisen. There is little hope of new school buildings and better trained and equipped teachers during the war. But why had the standards been left so deplorably low as late as 1939?

The vital need is for an inquiry to be put in hand forthwith into rural conditions, especially rural education.

KATHLEEN LITTLE

PRIVATE SCHOOLS

SIR,—Mr. Neill makes a point which has been worrying many of us. But the trouble goes far beyond the survival, or not, of pioneer schools. It raises the whole question of whether we are to have any freedom of choice in educating our children or whether they are to be taught just what the controlling Government of the day approves, whatever that Government happens to be—Communist, Fascist, Socialist, or what-not.

In your comment on Mr. Neill's letter you say that no one has proposed the abolition of pioneer schools. But that is just what is proposed by the Communist Party and certainly the Fascists would do the same in closing all privately run schools. Neither of these parties is likely to have much of a say in our post-war scheme of education, but many Socialists, I think I may say, most Socialists, would abolish private schools. There are also not a few Conservatives who would like to see all education run by the State on Public School lines. I am sorry, sir, that your nose does not smell danger. Mine does, and I shall not be surprised to see during the course of the next decade such schools as Mr. Neill's legislated out of existence on the most plausible grounds of some inadequacy or other and, in the most constitutional, legal, and superficially reasonable manner imaginable.

HAMIL WESTWOOD

THE PHILISTINE SCOT

SIR,—Mr. Rowse can always be trusted to lay down at least one word of maddening generalisation. This time it is "the insensitiveness, the dislike of art for itself, of music and painting, the philistinism of the Scottish peasant." No doubt Mr. Rowse is generalising from someone he has met. He can scarcely be remembering his history. Setting aside the Highlanders, a singing people, who still add to their own music and poetry continually, he was writing of the Lowland—in Carlyle's case of the Border—countryfolk. When Carlyle was born, Burns, a peasant, still lived; he was forty before Hogg, the Ettrick shepherd, died. The ballads cherished by the Lowland peasantry were the seed of the English romantic revival. The best versions of them were collected in cottages during Carlyle's prime. The dialect songs of the Lowlands, most singable and touching, and filled with praise of natural beauty, went round the world like a fire then, and are still a living folksong now. Mr. Rowse should strive not to confound personal prejudice with historic fact.

FREDA WHITE

FRUITLESS DAYS

SIR,—In his Diary of June 5th, "Critic" writes:—

A housewife said to me, apropos of the Order restricting the movement of soft fruit: "That means that the Minister of Food does not intend us to have any strawberries, raspberries or gooseberries. We shall not see one. . . . If they mean us not to have any fruit, why don't they treat us like grown-up people and say so?"

There should be no doubt about the Ministry's policy. On March 5th we issued a Press notice which began:—

"The Ministry of Food announces that the greater part of the home-grown soft fruit crop in 1943 will be devoted to jam manufacture and other forms of preservation, so as to reduce the shipping space required to import raw material for jam-making. The soft fruits mainly affected will be strawberries, raspberries, gooseberries and black currants."

At his conference with the press on June 1st, Lord Woolton repeated that the Ministry would direct the soft fruit in the first place to jam making, and that if there were a surplus, that surplus would go into the shops.

These and other similar statements have been widely published.

There is no foundation for the further statement that last year the growers let strawberries rot in the ground because it did not pay to pick them.

W. SHELTON SMITH,
Director of Public Relations

[Critic writes:—"True. But the Ministry did not get it over to the public—perhaps that was not the Ministry's fault—that we were unlikely to see *any* soft fruit in the shops. And what about rhubarb? There was plenty at a high price for a short time. At the controlled price there has been none in the shops, though one can see it growing in the country. Rhubarb would be a help in a gooseberryless world."—ED. *N.S. & N.*]

THE BRITISH IN INDIA

SIR,—Regarding Lord Elton's denial of the English having any idea of conquest when they went to India, mentioned by Critic in your issue of May 29th, Lord Elton made the same statement in an article in the *Daily Sketch*, on which I sent the editor of that paper the following quotation from a communication sent by the Directors of the East India Company to their agents in Madras in 1687. The agents were instructed:

> to establish such a Politie of Civill and Military Power and create such a large Revenue to maintain both at that place as may be the foundation of a large, well-grounded, sure English Dominion in India for all time to come.

The quotation was from Shelvankar's book, *The Problem of India*. I thought it unlikely that this would be published in the *Sketch*. It was not.

A. O. GRIFFITHS

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THE BODLEY HEAD

BOOKS IN GENERAL

STOLEN books are sweetest. I am not thinking of the books that I have stolen, though a lot might be said for that glister of intimate connivance, that animation in the print, which brightens one's loot as it becomes acclimatised to its new home. I am thinking of the books that have been stolen from me. I do not claim them. I have no wish to live my life again. But as I would like to revisit certain moments, so I would like, for a week or two, to borrow some of my stolen books back.

E. H. Carr's *The Romantic Exiles*, for example, one of the most amusing and cogent books of the last twelve years, is one I should like to see again; and with it, the lost three volume of Herzen's Reminiscences. They are companion studies of the Russian refugees of nearly a hundred years ago seen from the outside and the inside; they illuminate a group of people who have remarkable resemblances to the refugees of to-day and also to intellectuals in England between the wars. For the end of the Romantic movement is, in some respects, a shrill parody of its beginning. I should like to see if I still approved of Mr. Carr's dry and exceedingly ironical treatment of Herzen and his circle; to assure myself that Herzen's dignity, the hardness of his mind, the caustic brilliance of his observation, his isolated and stoical sufficiency were given a positive weight, in a story of lugubrious erotic comedy. The impression one had was of people who did not know how to live, who could not leave one another's marriages or incomes alone, who poisoned even the pleasures of seduction with the evasions of sexual uplift. The contrast between romantic theory and practice was irresistible, and Mr. Carr did not resist it. One by one, he withdrew Herzen and his circle from the hectic oxygen of their purpose in life; and we saw the exiles who had written in blood and tears dangling like plucked and doleful poultry upon the slab. Is my impression a false one? I remember being delighted by Mr. Carr's acidity, not bothering much about its complacency—between the wars one did not notice complacency readily—and far be it from me to cease to have low expectations and happy memories of human nature. But if I could get my copy of the book back I should know whether justice was done to the strength of Herzen's character. Of the revolutionary figures of his century—Engels alone excepted—Herzen is for me the most sympathetic. And he had the merit, if it is one, of being right about Russia and Socialism, where Marx and Engels were wrong.

I have read only one book of Herzen's: his *Memoirs*. This is one of the great autobiographies of the nineteenth century; indeed, I think a book of the highest rank. Of its style I can say nothing. I have read it only in French and in English, and in those translations the quality that comes out most strongly is the lack of dismay, the realism and the severe speculative independence of his mind. The *Memoirs* were written in middle age when he was bitterly conscious of "la logique impitoyable de la vie." That phrase may be, I suppose, one of those histrionic, autumnal cries which were heard in his time. Turgenev, also, liked to think of the leaves falling and the vanishing of youth; the cult of judgment and middle age, so typical of the nineteenth century and so established after 1848, had its root in politics. In Russia, Herzen himself notes that the Decembrists who came back from Siberia were "younger" than the generation that had grown up in their absence, and he was always the enemy of the spirit of an age where "tout devient mûr, affairé, c'est-à-dire bourgeois." But Herzen's judgment, and his truly remarkable sense of the world—especially remarkable in a revolutionary—had nothing to do with political fashion or historical accident. One simply has to say that they are natural to him. He had an intellect that masticated its experience. He was an adult.

Hence the stir of confidence we immediately feel when we pick up the *Memoirs*; and it is instructive to notice that precisely the quality of eclectic mastery prevents Herzen from being a considerable novelist. Herzen's sketches from life, his penetration of character and his hold on a story, come to nothing (I gather) in his one novel, *Whose Fault?* which is simply a verbose analysis of a triangular love story. A novelist does more—or less—than master his experience. He plays with his experience, he sets it against itself, or puts himself against it. He rearranges and unsettles. He substitutes revelation and mystery for expatiation. He seeks not one judgment but many. The instinctive novelist puts continual obstructions in the way of his own verdicts, and that obstruction is discovered to be life. From Herzen's *Memoirs* one can tell he was not that kind of writer. The force of personality was certainly stronger and more decisive in him than it is in most novelists.

Then, Herzen's independence: very quickly in his *Memoirs* we are struck by the writer's ability to stand on his own feet and to make his own observation. His power of observation is extraordinary. I do not mean merely that he sees things vividly or originally, but he tells you what he sees and how experience made him see it. His picture of his childhood in a dismal, aristocratic Russian household is not quite like anything else of the kind in Russian literature. I wonder does it owe something to Chateaubriand? The portrait of the hypochondriac father, with his arid cult of *savoir vivre* and the ceremony of his daily sarcasms and hourly habits, is the picture of a condition of mind and society as well as of a man. Herzen's memory particularises and generalises. We have a glimpse of the sad elder brother who is handed from surgeon to surgeon. We see the father assembling the servants and withering each one in turn with his mockery. We judge the different careers of the uncles and their finances. We catch the briefest sight of the passive German-Jewish mother suffocating among a host of female attendants in her room. We see the boy himself, neither Russian nor German, an exile from birth, wandering from room to room in his aunt's house where the silence is broken by the screech of a jacketed monkey and the scuffle of terrorised servants. The boy spends his time with the servants. Such a neglect might overwhelm the emotions of a boy; in Herzen it seems to have created the rebel, though (one suspects) it planted the seeds of hypochondria. The servants kept alive his natural affections. A large number of the sons of rich parents have been brought up among their family's servants, but Herzen is the only writer that I can remember who not only has described the servants he loved or disliked, but has troubled to analyse and generalise the subject. It is typical of Herzen to note that the cost of a household of servants in Russia in 1820 was a quarter of the cost in Paris. Where other writers of autobiography confine themselves to their personal life and private memory, Herzen appears already in boyhood to be documenting.

Herzen must have survived a lifetime as a refugee with dignity and indeed acquired his enormous European influence as a revolutionary pamphleteer, not because he was a rich man, but because he had learned exile in his own home. In his account of his imprisonment and exile in Russia as a student, we must be struck by his stoicism. How penetrating he is about his judges at the interrogations, how vivid are his descriptions of the long waits in the police headquarters and the anterooms. How shrewdly he judges the liberal men of influence who shuffled quickly out of trouble when he begged their help after young Ogarev's arrest. Herzen learned disillusion young, yet did not lose his heart. How dead on the mark are his notes on official society. The aristocracy had the indelicate task of persecuting the aristocracy; it was the period of the apologetic spy, the intermediary with the poker face and the hint. These things are unforgettable in the descriptions of Dostoevsky, too, but Dostoevsky as the artist's axe to grind—an axe apt to fly off the grindstone. Herzen succeeds in adding to reliable evidence a feeling of the deep animation that was hidden under the self-control of the educated man. He is adding all the time a sense of his intellectual development to the usual account of physical experience; he is cultivating what became his most important quality as a romantic writer and a revolutionary pamphleteer: his sense of situation. I suppose that is what I have been trying to get at: Herzen's gift for knowing not only what people are but how they are situated. How rare is the capacity to locate character in its time.

The great pamphleteers have always had a knowledge of the world, perhaps an underlying respect for it. Swift, Defoe, Cobbett certainly had. But Herzen's *savoir vivre* was not his father's. It is amusing to see the son using the same phrase—especially after reading Mr. E. H. Carr's narrative—and we must suppose that Herzen's declaration that the English bourgeois did not know how to live was based on the beliefs of nobler days in both senses of the word. The feverish life of the frustrated revolutionaries, a life in which he joined, did not sustain him. Revolution must create. He liked to dream of a harmonious, co-ordinated life such as he had had in his first marriage, before the diseases of Romanticism broke it up. In the end he fell back on "la logique impitoyable." To be disabused is itself a resource. That state of mind is more alive, at any rate, than the retreating mind of conventional orthodoxy. The son observed that *savoir vivre* in the father's sense meant a veritably religious observation of the conventions. Punctiliousness—a very bitter punctiliousness—became a grey drug; but after its doses, the orthodox heart shrank and faded. Melancholia was the price paid by Herzen's father, the procrastinating courtier, who killed himself by sneering at his own and everyone else's impulses.

There are many extraordinary chapters in the *Memoirs*, for Russia in that oppressed generation bred the isolated family in the isolated estate and people were left with nothing to do but to live off one another gluttonously, or to grimace in fantastic mental solitudes. One of the most extraordinary of these chapters is the one called "A Day in My Father's Life." It is far too long to quote. I will mention simply one delightful incident which occurred every day. This was a battle between the malign old gentleman and his angry valet. The old man would suggest to the valet that he ate a little black bread to take away the smell of spirits from his breath. The valet would mutter back as he left the room:

> Son maître le rappelait aussitôt, d'une voix toujours parfaitement calme, et lui demandait ce qu'il venait de dire.
>
> "Je n'ai rien annoncé," répondait-il.
>
> "A qui t'adressais-tu donc? Nous ne sommes que deux dans la chambre."
>
> "Je me parlais à moi-même."
>
> "Prends garde! C'est comme cela que commence la folie."
>
> Le valet de chambre s'éloignait en fureur et rentrait dans le cabinet qu'il habitait, près de la chambre à coucher de mon père; il y lisait la Gazette de Moscow et s'occupait à tresser des cheveux qu'il vendait aux perruquiers. Tout en travaillant ainsi il prisait avec frénésie, vraisemblablement pour passer sa colère; et, que cela tint à la force du tabac ou à la sensibilité des nerfs de son nez, il se mettait presque toujours à éternuer cinq ou six fois de suite.
>
> Le maître sonnait. Le valet de chambre jetait son paquet de cheveux et entrait.
>
> "Est-ce toi qui éternue?
>
> "C'est moi."
>
> "Que Dieu te bénisse"—et il lui faisait signe de se retirer.

I have not done justice to the portraits of these volumes. They are hard to summarise for they are discursive. And then there are my missing volumes on England and his love affairs; they would be worth writing about. From Primrose Hill and Bournemouth, Herzen recalled the horrors of the London streets and the angry comedy of middle-class hypocrisy. I have sought to convey instead the power of Herzen's character. His *Memoirs* are the autobiography of a European.

V. S. PRITCHETT

CENSORSHIP REGULATIONS allow readers to post this paper to any part of the British Empire (excepting Eire and Northern Ireland) and to any country of the American Continent (excepting dependencies of enemy-occupied countries) but readers are advised to consult a Post Office or a newsagent before attempting to post elsewhere.

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PROPHET AND SCIENTIST

The Way of the Land. By Sir George Stapledon. *Faber.* 12s. 6d.

The late Dr. Rudolf Steiner, I believe, began his career by specialising in mathematics and statistics. For he argued that only a man with such a factual background would receive attention as a mystic. Sir George Stapledon is an agricultural scientist of world renown who has made a greater contribution to the breeding of grasses and the management of pasture than any man in history, and, so far as I know, he makes no mystical claims. Yet he cannot escape the the mantle of the prophet. But a prophet, after all, is only a man who takes long views and sees things in a broad way, and this is what makes Stapledon's new book so much more than just another book about agriculture.

It is mostly a collection of papers and addresses given on various occasions, and to that extent it is bound to suffer a little from disjointedness in comparison with a book written with a continuous theme. But yet there is a theme that runs through it, the theme of the continuity of human and natural values in the life of the land, despite the economic vicissitudes that from time to time descend upon it. Thus one sees the capitalist system in perspective, as a very modern excrescence in the human story, that has brought great benefits, but contains also many weaknesses. Not least among these is its tendency to take short views, a failing in which capitalists and economists join hands. Jam for to-day, and never mind to-morrow's jam is its watchword. Let us skim the cream and get the food while it is cheap, never mind how expensive that food may be in the long run, or what future generations may thereby have to face starvation. It was this morbid opportunism, the refusal to take long views or to consider man's responsibility to his species, that bedevilled the policies of those who should have been our leaders in the years between the wars; it was a major cause of shovelling us into the war, and the main cause of the nation's betrayal of its soil. Stapledon does not argue, of course, that if we had cared for our agriculture all would have been well: it is rather that if we behaved ourselves like responsible and intelligent adults, then a vigorous life of the countryside: fertile, well-farmed acres, fresh, nutritious food, and the practical common sense of the countryman, would automatically become some of the added national assets through that way of thinking and acting. He himself is an illustration of the balanced view of the countryman who does not disdain contemplation, for although he castigates the ruthlessness of capitalism, he recognises some of its virtues in a rather striking chapter on "Imperialism." There he makes it clear that not all empire-building is bad, and that when man's urge to dominate can be sublimated into battling with Nature and the unknown, good things can flow from it. Empire building, for example, gave the world the famous pastures of New Zealand, which were made partly by men, but also by the cattle and sheep that we took there from this country. When Captain Cook first landed, there were no grazing animals on the whole island. Much the same is true of the development of Australia. There have been gold rushes and diamond rushes and many kinds of exploitation to disfigure the picture, but behind it all has remained the stabilising influence of simple folk from Britain who have understood agriculture, understood cattle and understood the sea. It is they, "the nameless humble," who have been the real empire builders and extended so greatly the world's storehouses of food, albeit the primary impulse may have been the urge to dominate and to possess.

Enough has been said to show that this book goes far deeper than the technicalities of ley-farming and pasture-making of which Stapledon is the acknowledged master. "The one thing," he says, "that dumbfounds informed agricultural visitors from abroad is our weird system of farming, based upon a wilderness of poor grass." He estimated in 1939 that the grass acreage ready to hand for greatly increased food production was little short of 10,000,000 acres. Since then, we have ploughed some 7,000,000 acres, and judging by what Mr. Hudson said to the Council of Agriculture on May 26th last, the whole of Stapledon's 10,000,000 and perhaps more will have come under the plough by 1947. Thus we can increase both our crops and the stock-carrying capacity of our grassland, for ploughing will unlock the fertility dormant in those old grass acres, and, with those gained for cereal crops, tired arable fields that have borne two or three white-straw crops in the war can be re-seeded to far better pasture than the permanent pastures that are ploughed. This is the very heart of the Stapledon system of ley-farming. But it should not be overlooked that it inevitably means a considerable expansion in our agriculture, in crops and livestock, both in peace and in war. This is something on which there can be no compromise. If we are to farm efficiently in the light of modern scientific knowledge, we can only avoid a considerable and permanent expansion in our farming output (to the tune of at least £100,000,000 at 1939 values on the farm), by sterilising millions of acres capable of growing much food and by forbidding any farming to take place there.

This brings one inevitably to the question of hill-farming and national parks, for might it not be possible to sterilise such land, if it were necessary, and turn it into great national playgrounds? This is what Stapledon says on the subject:

> It would be utter folly if, in our desire for natural beauty, any great blocks of country were denied to agriculture. The pursuit of agriculture has never disfigured any country anywhere, provided the farming is good . . . nature merely gains more scope for the display of her infinite glories through . . . utilitarian co-operation. . . . Note well this, there is an immense amount of hill land in Britain up to at least the 1,300ft. contour that is not only improvable from the grazing point of view, but which is actually farmable in the sense of being ploughable and crop-worthy.

What sort of a nation would we be if we rebelled against our inheritance because it was too fertile, and laid waste farmable acres for the sake of the economic theories of a past epoch? The war has shown us how nearly the canker of opportunism had eaten to the nation's soul. The neglect of agriculture was one aspect of it. We have escaped, for the time being, because enough of the old spirit was left still to work miracles. It is our second chance in twenty years and we dare not hope for a third, so may this book of Sir George Stapledon's be widely read, not only because he is a great scientist, but also that very rare bird—a practical prophet with his feet set firmly on the land.

L. F. Easterbrook

BALKAN GRAND HOTEL

Athene Palace: Bucharest. By R. G. Waldeck. *Constable.* 9s.

A peculiar interest attaches to any point of confluence—the junction of two great rivers, the frontier line at which one regional landscape begins to merge into the next, a city that forms the mingling-place of several different cultures. Hence the fascination of Bucharest, a metropolis neither wholly European nor really Oriental, coloured at various times by the influence of Central Europe, France, Russia, Turkey, peopled by a race whose genius is elastic, whose vices are multiform and whose loyalties are divided. During troubled times the position of a spectator in such cities is often advantageous, and, on the day that Paris fell in the summer of 1940, Countess Waldeck, an American journalist of Central European, non-Aryan, origin disembarked with her luggage at the Athénée Palace Hotel, which stands at the nerve-centre of the Roumanian capital, and prepared to watch the ripples set up by Hitler's latest victory as they swept across the Balkans. Roumania, she felt, was a country where developments might be expected. She was right. Her prescience was rewarded by a remarkable haul of news; but in the meantime she had fallen victim to the charm of her material and had begun to derive a detached imaginative pleasure from the life she was observing.

For this reason, and for many others, *Athene Palace: Bucharest* is a far more entertaining production—and far more truly a book—than the average volume turned out by an itinerant journalist in the interminable, and largely lamentable, "Last Train" series. The authoress may write almost as slangily; but there the resemblance ends. Her treatment of her subject shows that she is a person of reading and intelligence; she interprets her facts with the sympathy of a novelist, added to a journalist's skill. Not that the narrative she unfolds is flashy or romanticised. Countess Waldeck has an aptitude, uncommon among journalists, for describing current events in the perspective of history and literature, and for remembering that history is made by the passions of men and women, and that the motive behind the motive usually deserves analysis. Having said so much, one must admit that her opportunities were splendid. Stories fell into her lap. She need only sit in the *foyer* of the Athénée Palace, attended by a faithful Greek chorus composed of two very old, very experienced, very wicked Roumanian cosmopolitans, and the main personages of the Balkan tragedy filed obligingly before her. Francophil high society had been shaken to its depths by the sudden collapse of France. Bucharest and the hotel in which she lived were full of Hitler's envoys, from accredited diplomats and economic experts to such semi-official, but exceedingly serviceable, emissaries as Frau von Kohler, whose duty it was to insist charmingly and subtly, on what Countess Waldeck (in her, now and then, rather unpleasing prose style) calls the "normalcy" of the Nazi revolution, by giving agreeable little parties at which the nicest and most cultured Roumanians could meet the nicest and most cultured Germans, and whose rare social tact made her an outstanding success among Nazi propagandists. Countess Waldeck provides a neat sketch of Frau von Kohler's aims and methods. Hers was the job of cultural and social window-dressing:

> All revolutionary propaganda, inasmuch as it works on the decisive groups of the *status quo* abroad, has the aim of breaking the resistance of these groups by putting up a show of normalcy; a show meant to convince these groups abroad that the corresponding groups back home have retained their privileges under the revolution; a show which makes the propagandised groups end up by saying "All these atrocity stories are untrue. *My* kind of people are very well off . . ." The idea of these parties was to reassure the Roumanians that the "right" people . . . led a normal and pleasant life under Hitler's dictatorship. The idea was to convince the rich in Bucharest that the rich in Berlin made money and enjoyed it; to convince Roumanian intellectuals that German intellectuals could talk as freely as themselves; to convince Roumanian women that German women were beautifully dressed and made up.

An agent, more cynical than Frau von Kohler but at heart as fanatical and as convinced a Nazi, was the Count (otherwise unnamed) who reminded the authoress of some debonair young cardinal of the Inquisition, noble-looking, impassive, elegant, according to whom totalitarianism was a way of life to be imposed for their own good on the vast stupid majority, while the elect, including himself, remained aloof and relatively independent, free to read prohibited books and converse with non-Aryan journalists. Judging by her chapter-headings, the authoress's imagination has been much excited by Dostoevsky's superb *Legend of the Grand Inquisitor*; and, since a Roumanian friend (who acknowledges the factual accuracy of the story as a whole) is at a loss to identify this particular personage, I am tempted to believe that in the Count she may have

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densed and combined tendencies she had served in several different individuals. Be it as it may, the portrait she draws is memorable and convincing. From some points of view it is altogether unimpressive; for it is one of the virtues of Countess Waldeck's book that, although she detests the Nazis and considers that the adroitness of their diplomacy, at least in the Balkans, has been vastly over-praised, she does not minimise the industry, ability and, here and there, in their own perverted fashion, the integrity of German agents, experts, soldiers and technicians. The Germans of the previous army of occupation in 1917 had quickly been corrupted. These new Germans arrived with the staunch determination that Bucharest should not prove their Capua. The older officers of the Military Mission were correct and guarded; and, when the younger men spent the night with a casual mistress, their choice fell invariably on some homely *Volksdeutsche* servant girl, guaranteed pure Aryan and approved for circulation by the Gauleiter. The Count complacently explained their feelings:

"All these boys," he said, "are married well, I mean from a racial point of view, and would think it improper towards their wives at home to start an affair which might engage them in any other than a functional way. With these Volksdeutsche girls such a danger does not exist."

I said: "How awfully dull!" He replied laconically: "This generation likes it dull."

Countess Waldeck, however, is not concerned exclusively with Roumania's German masters. The greater part of her book is devoted to Bucharest itself as she watched it from the summer of 1940 to the end of January, 1941. She has written a brilliant chapter round Carol and the devious part he played—"Carol," once remarked his father, "is a very good boy, very intelligent too. But he is like a Swiss cheese: he has so many holes"—and deals at length with Madame Lupescu and her camarilla, with Codreanu, that mystical fascist of a formidably romantic appeal, and with his successor, the bloodthirsty Horia Sima and other members of the Iron Guard, who survived savage persecution by Carol's police to be liquidated at last by General Antonescu, when he finally decided to discard his green shirt. To enjoy this book one need not be interested in the Balkans: one need only be interested in human nature. As I have suggested, it is not well written in the ordinary meaning of the phrase, but it is put together with genuine intelligence, by a woman whose acquired transatlantic shrewdness and directness are qualified by an unusually acute appreciation of the tragedy and beauty of the European continent.

PETER QUENNELL

BIAS WITH SOBRIETY

Indian Politics, 1936-1942. By R. COUPLAND. *Oxford University Press.* 7s. 6d.

In so far as it conveys facts, Professor Coupland's book performs a most useful service. In so far as it formulates a political judgment, it conveys in sober language and judicial tones a flagrantly biased view. But students of Indian affairs must on the balance be grateful to the author for the pains he has taken to collect the main facts about Indian political life during the past six years. In particular he has given a close analytical record of the working of self-government in the provinces, since the Act of 1935 came into force. These facts and figures are to be found nowhere else and in these sections of his book the author has struggled hard to be fair to Congress in matters of detail. The general picture is encouraging: everywhere order was maintained: everywhere the finances were managed with prudence: everywhere there was some progress in social reform. But it appears quite clearly from Professor Coupland's own statements that Congress achieved much more than its rivals in the matter of social reform; that its campaign against illiteracy and its scheme of "basic education" showed enlightenment as well as zeal: that it struggled hard to cope with the problem of debt in the villages, and in some of its provinces carried out some ambitious public works. Its conduct in discouraging and where need be repressing communal feuds is admitted to have been excellent. After these balanced chapters, it is startling to find Professor Coupland ascribing to Congress the sole responsibility for everything that has gone wrong in India and more especially for the communal feud. Never, even by a mild phrase of retrospective regret, does he criticise the Government—not even for bringing India into the war without her consent, nor for the tricky "August" offer, nor for any of Mr. Churchill's verbal indiscretions. Nor, with the exception of one complaint of verbal exaggeration does he ever criticise the Muslim League, or question its claim to speak for all Indians of its faith. But against Congress he maintains the damning verdict that it is a "totalitarian" party. This judgment, borrowed from Mr. Guy Wint, is justified only in the sense that Congress seeks in its war of liberation to rally all the national forces within its ranks. Every nationalist party, from Parnell's day onwards, always has tried to achieve disciplined unity in this way. In no other sense is Congress "totalitarian": it does not seek to abridge the right of free discussion, nor does it maintain the Führer principle, though it does pay an excessive veneration to Mr. Gandhi. Professor Coupland assumes without argument that Congress ought to have shared office with the Muslim League after its sweeping victories in the provincial elections of 1937. Precisely why? It did everywhere give ministerial posts to Muslims, out of all proportion to their numbers. But why was it incumbent on it to appease, not Muslims, but a particular oppositional group of Muslims in this way? We do not expect the Tories after beating Labour soundly at a general election, to offer it several seats in the Cabinet. In 1937 India was not at war. The same bias appears in the Professor's narrative of the Cripps mission from which he has omitted every fact that could render the attitude of the Congress leaders intelligible, if not justifiable.

H. N. BRAILSFORD

EASY GOING

Tales from Two Pockets. By KAREL CAPEK. Trans. by PAUL SELVER. *Allen and Unwin.* 7s. 6d.

Capek's writings—I judge from the dozen books I have read—have a scattered charm. He lacked development; plays, novels, fantasies, essays, fairy tales—they all charmed and hinted at greater things which were never accomplished. Perhaps he was at his best in *The Insect Play*, the letters from abroad, and such humorous trifles as *I Had a Dog and a Cat*. *Tales from Two Pockets*, reissued after ten years, is a collection of crime stories told with a pleasing mixture of realism and gaiety. Their faults are quickly discovered: the sardonic click ends a rambling anecdote as regularly as the little bell of a pintable. Most of these tales were written for newspapers and the trick that would come off once or twice a week has to be repeated here on consecutive pages. One is tickled by it, annoyed, bored, but finally indulgent, because the author's lively and amiable qualities overflow a meretricious smartness. He gives us, in the lightest and most familiar of terms, a world: the world of crooks and cops, of crime not paying, of the habit-ridden burglar, the plodding tec, and the domesticities common to both. There is little essential difference—this gives the freshness to these tales—between right and wrong, the pursuer and the pursued. They may be technically on different sides of the fence, but look a little more closely, explore the newspaper paragraph a little farther, and you'll find there's no fence at all. The famous surgeon who collects carpets is quite capable of becoming a carpet-stealer; the judge

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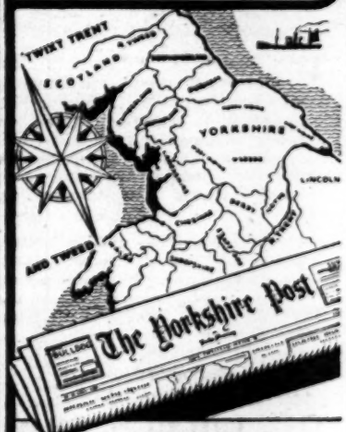

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who passes sentence on a peasant charged with murder secretly approves the reason of the crime. Gossip, conviviality, shadiness, enterprise and guilt spread over the usual barriers; and Capek ropes in, with humorous exaggeration, the humdrum and respectable as well as the markedly eccentric. The *tone* of these stories (one thinks, by contrast, of the appalling novelette world of the detective story) is delightfully off-hand, sly, and true to experience. I have tried, as an experiment, to read a new detective novel by Mrs. Eberhart at the same time, but the competition is unfair. Capek wins by miles and miles. G. W. STONIER

REPTON TO CHINA

Maiden Voyage. By DENTON WELCH. *Routledge.* 10s. 6d.

To write an autobiography in one's early twenties is both a bold and a cautious decision. Bold because a whole army of irritable elders will be ready with their ridicule; cautious because this, after all, is the only material to which one can claim an absolute monopoly. Mr. Welch has written the boldest kind of autobiography, and his courage has been rewarded by a work of outstanding originality and merit. There is no self-consciousness in his self-absorption, and little reticence; better still, there is no disloyalty to his recent past. No attitude is commoner or more odious than the patronage of an adult towards his own adolescence, the complacent assurance of present superiority. Mr. Welch takes himself seriously, though humour is not lacking, and when he finds his actions discreditable he treats them with cold severity rather than whimsical disassociation.

The whole book is enclosed in the author's eventful seventeenth year. He runs away from Repton, but is later persuaded to return there for one term. That term ended, he goes out to his father in China, where he makes one journey into the interior and another to Pekin. The material is as rich as any young autobiographer could wish, but how easy it would have been to make the story either lifeless or pretentious. Mr. Welch avoids all the obvious pitfalls with bewildering assurance. The qualities which appear to give him this confidence are a rich sensibility and a merciless perception.

"She was between fifty and sixty and the ends of her silk scarves fluttered in the wind. Her head and neck were like the Roman symbol of an arc embedded in a bundle of sticks. The neck was all broken up into wrinkled skin and corded muscles, and the head jutted out at the top.

"I anxiously watched as the little plates were brought. Each one had some different cold and pickled vegetable piled on it. I began nervously to pick at them, tasting the delicate watery flavours on my tongue. It seemed a fresh, airy sort of meal but, being afraid of it, I hated every mouthful."

"... the dried sediment in the empty decanters reminded me of scabs on sores."

There is nothing clamorous or sensational about such writing, but the impression is always precise, vivid and imaginative. And the descriptions of *objets d'art*, of people or of a human head rotting in the dust are all equally happy. Mr. Welch is a painter as well as a writer, and his illustrations suggest that his talent here, though less considerable, is an explanation of his dexterity in purely visual description.

Maiden Voyage will shock some people by its level relentless tone, by the author's instinctive hatred of illusion and pretence. Without a hint of toughness, without the least false note of cynicism, there is a feline unsentimentality about Mr. Welch which is immensely stimulating. I do not agree with Miss Edith Sitwell who speaks in her foreword of "a moving and youthful quality." Youth is usually clouded, imitative and insecure, whereas Mr. Welch, even in his most defenceless moments, seems to be armoured by his alert and honest mind. But I agree with Miss Sitwell's conclusion that he "may easily prove to be not only a born writer but a very considerable one." PHILIP TOYNBEE

Morte di Italiani. By STEFANO TERRA. Edizioni di "Giustizia e Liberta" (Cairo).

These tales are written for a double purpose. They are anti-Fascist propaganda, and also propaganda for the use of spoken Italian in literature instead of what the author calls "dannunzianismo." It must have needed real originality to preserve the values for which this book stands through twenty years of totalitarian Italy, where every mental process has been subjected to distortion. Apart from their witness to the spirit of humanity, the stories are well told; tales of the death of a turner denied State medical assistance, of the mind of a soldier dying in the war against Greeks whom he thinks have every right to defend their valleys, of a prisoner in *confinato*, of a man working night-shift in the deadly sulphuric fumes of the artificial silk factory. In each case the man described is without hope, in each he lives on memory—usually of his village or small Lombard town—in each he is torn by the machine which treats the individual as mere raw material for the use of the State. All the people live by faithfulness to their friends, one o by the memory of a lost liberty; they have no illu only endurance. The Free Italians of Egypt done well to publish this record, transparently si of the working people to whom Fascism is as m enemy as it is to us who are fighting them.

Orientations. By SIR RONALD STORRS. *Nich and Watson.* 10s. 6d.

Now that Egypt, Palestine and Cyprus brim members of the M.E.F., this autobiography sh attract a larger public than ever. Sir Ronald S writes with constant wisdom and frequent wit; material is intensely interesting, whether he deal Harry Cust at Crabbet, Kitchener in Cairo, or T Lawrence in the R.A.F.; and the style is outstan in liveliness and distinction. The chapter on Zio can be recommended as the most objective acc that has ever been published. This new editio described as "definitive" and contains new mat No better present could be found for friends in M.E.F.

Week-end Competitions

No. 697

Set by Raymond Mortimer

The usual prizes are offered for an English ver of one of the following poems.

BIENTÔT.

De tous les printemps du monde
Celui-ci est le plus laid
Entre toutes mes façons d'être
La confiance est la meilleure

L'herbe soulève la neige
Comme la pierre d'un tombeau
Moi je dors dans la tempête
Et je m'éveille les yeux clairs

Le lent le petit temps s'achève
Ou toute rue devait passer
Par mes plus intimes retraites
Pour que je rencontre quelqu'un

Je n'entends pas parler les monstres
Je les connais ils ont tout dit
Je ne vois que les beaux visages
Les bons visages sûrs d'eux-mêmes

Sûrs de ruiner bientôt leurs maitres.

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Quand, maîtresse des territoires,
Tu menais de ta main chérie
La choeur éclatant de Victoires ;

On louait ta blancheur de cygne
Et ton ciel, dont la transparence
Charme tes forêts et ta vigne ;
On disait : " Voyez ! c'est la France ! "

Mais à présent, humiliée,
Sainte buveuse d'ambroisie,
Farouche, acculée, oubliée,
Je t'adore ! Avec frénésie.

Je baise tes mains valeureuses,
A présent que l'éponge amère
Brûle tes lèvres douloureuses
Et que ton flanc saigne—ma mère !

Envelopes should be marked with the number the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and ould be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great rnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor irst post on Monday, June 21st.

The Editor's decision is final. He reserves right to print in part or as a whole any matter in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. ot be returned. When no entries reach the ired standard no prize will be awarded.

SULT OF COMPETITION No. 694

by V. S. Pritchett

At the end of *Joseph Andrews* Fielding introduces ichardson's beloved Pamela into his novel in order guy her. The normal prizes are offered for a milar malignant grafting from one novel to nother, in not more than 200 words.

ort by V. S. Pritchett

ielding's malice when he introduced Pamela into *ph Andrews* was subtle and profound. Quietly the s little gold-digger—if admirers of Pamela will ve me—became the prig and snob which marriage been waiting to make her. She rustles in and ns her chin—a young Mrs. Grundy. It was not ible because of the limited length of this com- ion to go in for such satisfying effects. William s and Yorick groaned under the limitation and duced witty entries which were, alas, far too long. ideas were sound. Irene Forsyth revealed in a erset Maugham novel as a gold-digger ; this was ck and on the crude side. Mr. Bliss was wittier little Nell consoling the lost blaspheming days of tain Costigan with an angel light and a procession ints from The Grapes. A surprising juxtaposition was Sherlock Holmes in a story of Kai Lung, but here as in many other entries one missed the necessary dig of satire. H. T. S. came nearer the mark when he mixed up Bertie Wooster, Mrs. Miniver and a lot of children with adenoids. Allan Laing introduced some horseplay at the expense of Mr. D'Arcy in a Dingley Dell scene. Pickwick (rather inexplicably, I thought) got a knock on the head from Crusoe and Friday in Joseph Baguley's Defoe. Stanley Sharpless got Dorian Gray into Esther's bedroom in *Bleak House* and Stroadski exposes Bulldog Drummond at The Drones. But to my mind Bernard Catsell's Anatole France was the most amusing entry. He has the first prize. He has slightly exceeded the required length ; but a large number of competitors almost doubled the order. I beg competitors to sin discreetly, if sin they must. The second prize goes to the virtuous H. T. S.

FIRST PRIZE

JANE EYRE RENCONTRE JACQUES TOURNEBROCHE A LA ROTISSERIE DE LA REINE PEDAUQUE

" Je vais te présenter maintenant, mon ami," me dit l'Abbé Coignard, " A une jeune Anglaise douée d'une certaine notoriété parmi ses compatriotes pour sa largesse d'esprit. Mademoiselle Jane Eyre . . . Monsieur Tournebroche."

Je m'inclinai en murmurant mon enchantement, juste assez pour apercevoir que ses chevilles n'étaient pas du tout mauvaises. La jeune fille me dévisageait un instant, puis me dit avec un accent impéccable de gouvernante anglaise :

" Comment vous portez-vous, Monsieur Tournebroche ? J'éspère que je ne vous ai pas trop troublé."

" Au contraire, Mademoiselle," lui répondais-je, " Vous me troublez beaucoup."

" Elle est délicieuse, cette petite," me chuchota l'Abbé. " Son seul défaut est une inflexibilité morale qui accorde mal avec sa poitrine admirable. Mais je l'aime mieux ainsi. Une Jane Eyre qui tout en rappelant la douce moiteur de son climat anglais, me jetait une oeillade tant soit peut lascive, m'inspirerait une crainte considérable. *Timeo Danoes et dona ferentes.*"

Mademoiselle Jane me regardait avec une franchise qui ne laissait pas de doute sur sa correction impitoyable. Cette demoiselle n'avait sûrement péché que mentalement, et même dans ses visions les plus lubriques il devait manquer un peu de netteté dans les détails.

Je lui demandai si elle connaissait les salamandres. Sa réponse m'étonna beaucoup.

" Nous en avions une chez nous, Monsieur. Un maladroit l'a renversée toute remplie de huile carburante qu'elle était. L'incendie qui en résulta a détruit les dernières traces de ma respéctabilité."

BERNARD CATSELL

SECOND PRIZE

BERTIE WOOSTER MEETS MRS. MINIVER

I found my Aunt Agatha in the sitting-room talking to a little woman of approximately my Aunt Dahlia's weight and age.

" Bertie," she said, " I want you to meet Mrs. Miniver."

" Right-ho," I replied, cordially. " Any time you like."

The old relative appeared to be somewhat peeved.

" Mrs. Spenser Gregson should have said that *I* am Mrs. Miniver," interrupted the little woman, beaming bonhomously at me.

" Rather a joke if she had," I said, laughing heartily. " I mean, you're not exactly Greer Garson, what ? "

" Bertie ! " said my Aunt tensely—and I think it was at this moment that the scales fell from my eyes. " If you will cease being idiotic I will tell you why *Mrs. Miniver* is here. She is getting up a concert in her village—a sing-song to be given entirely by children suffering from adenoids. She says that usually they don't get the chance to sing, and feel dreadfully hurt."

" Jolly good scheme," I said, thinking that this was just the kind of loony idea Mrs. M. would have.

" And you will accompany the singers with your banjo, won't you ? " twittered Mrs. Miniver, and next moment they had gone.

" Jeeves ! " I yelled. H. T. S.

THE BEVERIDGE PLAN :
Where Are We Now ?

The two-page article by G. D. H. Cole, which appeared under the above title in our issue of March 27th, has been reprinted, with additions and a Table, in the form of a pocket-sized 16 pp. pamphlet, and is published to-day, price 3*d*., postage 1*d*. (Post free for six or more copies. Special quotation for 50 or more copies.)

This small pamphlet is not a summary of the Beveridge Report, but compresses into as little space as possible a summary of what the Government has promised, and not promised, to do about the Beveridge Plan. It will be especially helpful to those who are seeking to concentrate public attention in order to secure the Government's acceptance of the Beveridge Plan as a whole.

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DUNLOP RUBBER

n 44th ordinary general meeting of the op Rubber Company, Ltd., was held on 9th in London, Sir J. George Beharrell, D. (the chairman) presiding.

e following is an extract from the chair- 's statement circulated with the report accounts :—

en I made my statement last year the r industry was already subject to strict rament control, but the volume of our ess has not been affected to the extent anticipated, although both in this try and overseas it has been subjected drastic readjustments to meet the ition.

scheme was devised for the control of rts, in the form of market quotas, based ssential requirements, and their satis- on, where possible, from the nearest facturing source of supply. This s has naturally brought about a sharp n turnover of exports from this country. rtheless, in spite of this, profits earned e reduced turnover compare favourably previous years.

e net profit for the year amounted to ,000, compared with £3,186,000 last The decline in profits is due to a ilment of business owing to regulations also to the lower margin of profit on greatly increased proportion of business he Allied Governments. The aggregate s of the parent company and all sub- ries for 1942 amount to £4,472,000, st £5,185,000 last year.

e need for strictest economy in the e of rubber is apparent, and your Board continue to co-operate with the Govern- in all measures to this end.

feel that although there must be no sature optimism and no relaxation of , we can all look forward to the future confidence.

e report was adopted.

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